

THE VINDICATORS OF  
SHAKESPEARE. A REPLY  
TO CRITICS.— G. G. GREENWOOD

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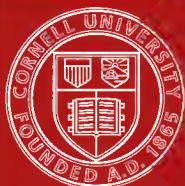
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THE VINDICATORS  
OF SHAKESPEARE  
A REPLY TO CRITICS



# THE VINDICATORS OF SHAKESPEARE

A REPLY TO CRITICS ❀

TOGETHER WITH SOME REMARKS ON

DR. WALLACE'S "NEW SHAKESPEARE DISCOVERIES."

BY G. G. GREENWOOD, M.P.

AUTHOR OF "THE SHAKESPEARE PROBLEM RESTATED"

"While these are censors 'twould be sin to spare.  
While such are critics why should I forbear?"

*Byron.*

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PART I.

THE VINDICATORS  
OF SHAKESPEARE  
A REPLY TO CRITICS ❖

While these are censors 'twould be sin to spare.

While such are critics why should I forbear ?

—BYRON.

I HAVE been told by an unknown adviser in the public press, that it is very unwise to answer criticism. But, surely, the application of such a rule must depend both on the nature of the criticism, and the character of the work criticised. A poet, or a novelist, is generally very ill-advised if he attempts a reply to his critics. But where the subject matter is essentially controversial, to remain silent like a lamb before his shearer, is to leave untenable and misleading arguments unanswered, and to give a free hand to misunderstanding and misrepresentation. This, in the interest of the controversy itself, and of the object in view, viz., the discovery of truth, I am unwilling to do, nor

am I altogether content to sit patiently in the stocks while certain of the boy-scouts of literature use me as a target for their clods of criticism. In Jonsonian phrase, "I therefore will begin."

In June, 1908, I published, through Mr. John Lane, of "The Bodley Head," a book bearing title *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, in which I endeavoured to set forth the arguments which seem to me to support the case of those who hold that Shakspeare, the Stratford player, was not, in truth and in fact, the author of the plays and poems given to the world under the name of "Shakespeare," while leaving the question of the true authorship absolutely untouched. I published the work with some anxiety, for, as I wrote in my Preface, I had a shrewd idea of the sort of treatment which would be meted out to it. "The High Priests of Literature will treat it," I said, "with frigid and contemptuous silence. The College of Stratfordian Cardinals will at once put it on the Index. The Grand Inquisitors,—or Inquisitress!—of the Temple by Avon's sacred stream will decree that it shall be burnt (metaphorically, at any rate), by the common hangman, and 'The Brilliant Young Man,' who has, perhaps, bestowed half an hour to the subject, and therefore understands it in every detail, will, if he should condescend to notice it at all, see in it

a grand opportunity for once more convulsing the world with his side-splitting original joke about 'gammon of Bacon,' or his famous paradox that 'There is no Learning but Ignorance.'"<sup>1</sup> I might have added that every Demetrius the silversmith, who makes images for the shrine at Stratford (and their name is Legion), would be ready to raise the cry, as of old time, "our craft is in danger to be set at naught!" Nevertheless I have been agreeably surprised. The book has met with more success than I had ventured to anticipate, both in this country and the United States. It has received the abuse of those whose abuse I value, and, what is still better, the praise of those whose praise I estimate even more highly than that stimulating abuse. Financially, too, it has done well, and I am happy to be able to assure those "good-natured" critics, (if indeed there were more than one), who thought it seemly to prophecy grievous loss to the author, that the work has not only paid its way, but has earned, and is still earning, considerable profit. All which is not a little encouraging to those of the unorthodox faith.

<sup>1</sup> As to "The Brilliant Young Man," so conspicuous at the present day,—for truly he does not hide his light under a bushel,—I would refer the reader to an article under this title in the *Westminster Gazette*, of January 16th, 1904, and in *The Westminster Budget*, of January 29th, 1904, signed "Digamma."

The book has, however, been naturally subjected to much criticism, some of it not a little severe. It is true that the leviathans of literature have, as I anticipated, not condescended to take much notice of it, but have left the battle to the small fry. The Dreadnoughts have remained at their moorings, while the submarines have been despatched to the attack. But the torpedoes which have been launched have proved to be of the "soft-nosed" variety, and, although the hull may have been slightly damaged in places, the threatened ship still rides the waves of controversy.

And now, dropping metaphor, I will deal fairly and squarely with that criticism which has mainly prompted this rejoinder.

#### **"The Nineteenth Century and After"**

*The Nineteenth Century* (March and April, 1909), published two long articles from the pen of Sir Edward Sullivan, under the title of "The Defamers of Shakespeare," directed partly against the late Judge Webb, but in the main, and, indeed, almost entirely, against my humble self, as the author of *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*. Thereupon I tendered a request to the Editor for a like amount of space for a reply. This was not granted to me, but I was graciously allowed one article wherein to answer Sir Edward's



double-barrelled onslaught, and, knowing that the doubter of the Stratfordian faith meets in "orthodox" quarters with rather worse treatment than that which was accorded to the religious heretic of old, I trust I was properly thankful for such a concession. This article was given a place in the June number of the Review, under the title of "The Vindicators of Shakespeare." And here, I fondly thought, was an end of the matter so far as the *Nineteenth Century* was concerned; but, lo! in the August number there appeared two more "Shakespearean" articles, one on "Francis Bacon as a Poet," again by "Sir Edward Sullivan, Bart.," the other "A Last Word to Mr. George Greenwood, by the Rev. Canon Beeching." Sir Edward's article, like the scorpion, carried its sting (a very venomous one) in the tail, while the nature of the Canon's paper may be gathered from its title. Now, as this was the first time that the reverend controversialist had done me the honour to attack me in *The Nineteenth Century*, and as, moreover, my assailant of "the bloody hand" had taken the opportunity of his article on "Francis Bacon" to make a vicious stab at me, I humbly conceived it would only be just and in accordance with the ordinary rules of fair-play, in the observance of which British journalism is so honourably distin-

guished, that I should be permitted to publish a brief article in self-defence. This, however, the Editor declined to allow. I forbear to comment. I only ask the reader to be so kind as to give his attention to what follows, and to judge for himself.

I will deal first with Sir Edward Sullivan. Sir Edward, for some reason which I have so far been unable to appreciate, apparently thinks himself entitled to write in a very superior, didactic, *de haut en bas*, or "Pomponius Ego" style. It is, it would seem, an act of immense condescension on his part to criticise my work at all, and I trust I am duly sensible of the honour done me, though I fear the irreverent have not always taken him quite so seriously as his manner would seem to require. In the language of the Latin grammar, "*erant qui riderent.*" *Anglice*: "There were some who laughed." Thus a valued correspondent in the United States has somewhat felicitously described this *preux chevalier* as lecturing me in the "Tittlebat Toplofty" manner. But let us examine some of his arguments, and pronouncements, and see what weight they are entitled to.

#### **Sir Tittlebat Toplofty**

Sir Edward in the last of the three assailant articles, space for which was so obligingly put

at his disposal by the Editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, says, in his own delightful style, that I am "not quite the person to 'come here to whine' for sympathy, when I get 'knocked about the mazzard.'"<sup>1</sup> This is purest "Sullivanese," and a most bare-faced *suggestio falsi* to boot. I most cheerfully leave it to any reader who has done me the honour to peruse my article, "The Vindicators of Shakespeare" (*Nineteenth Century*, June, 1909), to say whether I have "whined" therein, in any sense, degree, or form. I do not think I should be inclined to whine to "Sir Tittlebat Toplofty," of all people in the world. The plain fact is that Sir Edward Sullivan, for all his Bobadil airs, is not well qualified to instruct either myself or the world in general, upon the subject of Shakespeare. I could give several reasons in support of this proposition, but the two following will, I think, suffice:—

### **The Folio of 1640!**

(1) He is so little conversant with the elementary facts of Shakespearean bibliograhpy that he imagined there was a Shakespeare Folio of 1640, and he knew nothing of the edition of "Poems : written by Wil. Shake-speare, Gent," published at that date in small octavo, and reprinted in

<sup>1</sup> *Nineteenth Century*, August, 1909.

facsimile in 1885. I will make this quite clear. I pointed out in my book<sup>1</sup> that Leonard Digges wrote some verses which were prefixed to the 1640 edition of Shakespeare's poems, and which are such a tissue of absurdities, and so entirely inapplicable to Shakespeare, that "Digges was either writing with his tongue in his cheek, or had no conception what he was talking about." What says Sir Edward Sullivan on this? After alluding to Digges' earlier lines, which appear in the Folio of 1623, he writes: "he [myself to wit] discovers that Digges wrote another set of verses which appeared in the 1640 edition of the Folio!" And when I point to this ridiculous error as excellent evidence of the sort of qualification possessed by one who affects to lecture me in the style of "dear Lady Disdain," what is his reply? It is (a) that I forget that "the whole point of" his "observations was the date, and not the size of the book," and (b) that "in a hasty and regrettable moment" he "took 'The Folio of 1640' straight from page 535" of my own work.

I leave the first plea to speak for itself in all its naked absurdity. But what of the second? It gives the reader to understand that I myself have been guilty of the very error upon which I animadvert when it occurs in a page of hostile

<sup>1</sup> *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, p. 336.

criticism, and that by such error Sir Edward Sullivan was unfortunately misled. Now, even if this had been the case, Sir Edward would no less have been convicted of ignorance. But what is the fact? The breezy Baronet no doubt calculated that his readers would not take the trouble to turn to the reference indicated, but if they will kindly do so they will find that it is one of the pages in the long, and, on the whole, I think I may say, well-executed Index. Here they will see a very large number of references under the head of "Folio," and amongst them, unfortunately, is "Folio of 1640." Now this Index was not compiled by me, for being too busy to undertake the work, I requested Mr. John Lane to put it in the hands of an Index-maker, and I shall not, perhaps, be very severely taken to task because I failed to notice the slip in question amid a multitude of references.

The majority of Sir Edward's readers, therefore, are given to understand that I have myself made the absurd blunder of speaking of "the Folio of 1640," while those few of them who may take the trouble to refer to the page in question are asked to believe—what? That perusing the Index of my book he came across the words "Folio of 1640," and therefore concluded, poor guileless man, that there was such

a Folio in existence, and that when I used the words "the 1640 edition of Shakespeare's poems," I must, of course, be referring to that imaginary Folio.

Is not this just a little "thin?" Is it not the fact that Sir Edward Sullivan detected the Indexer's slip *after* he had written his two articles on those whom he is pleased to call "The Defamers of Shakespeare?" I have no doubt that so it was. In any case, what a defence is this for one who poses as an authority on Shakespeare,—that he made this revealing blunder on the strength of a mere reference in the Index of a book which he affects to treat with such supreme contempt! And this is he who, in an article, appropriately called "The School of Assumption,"<sup>1</sup> speaks with lofty scorn of those "whose writings stamp them as unfamiliar with even the elementary facts and conditions of sixteenth and seventeenth century literature"! This is "boomerang" criticism with a vengeance. I do not think *my* "mazzard" has much to complain of here!

But if in earlier days a charge of blundering so baseless and so disingenuous (to use the mildest expression) had been brought against me in the

<sup>1</sup> In *The Library*, July, 1909. "*Assume* a knowledge if you have it not," should have been the motto prefixed.

pages of a public periodical, I venture to say that I should have been allowed to reply to it from the same platform, and as of right. I am no *laudator temporis acti*, but I know that an editor of a review or journal of high standing in earlier days did not allow his pages to be made the vehicles of charges such as this without according to the individual so attacked, as in common justice he is bound to do, the right of answer. But, evidently, *nous avons changé tout cela*. This, verily, is a controversy "*ubi tu pulsas, ego vapulo tantum*."<sup>1</sup>

But again, if Sir Edward consulted my Index, as he pretends he did, he might surely have consulted my Table of Dates also, where he would have learnt the dates of the three first Shakespeare Folios, and where he might have noticed that the only Folio entered as issued in 1640 is Vol. II. of the First Folio of Jonson's Works. Sir Edward tells us, by the way, that Digges wrote the lines in question "*several years afterwards*" (original italics), viz. : after 1623. Apparently he was unaware that the poem was, as Halliwell-Phillipps

<sup>1</sup> "According to all the unwritten laws you should have had the right to reply to your critics," writes Mr. John Lane, amongst others ; and *a fortiori* so, I would suggest, when my high-souled lofty critic, having badly blundered himself, seeks, by a trick which I will not further characterise, to put his absurd blunder upon my shoulders !

says, evidently written soon after the opening of the second Fortune Theatre in 1623, *and bears every appearance of having been intended for one of the commendatory verses prefixed to the first folio* (*Outlines*, Vol. II., p. 88 of the sixth edition).<sup>1</sup> Digges himself, it should be mentioned, died five years before the 1640 volume was published.

### The Induction to "A Midsummer Night's Dream" !

The second reason which convinces me that Sir Edward Sullivan is not competent to instruct me and the world at large upon the Shakespeare controversy is this :—

(2) He committed to paper, and passed in "proof" form, the amazing statement that Christopher Sly, "old Sly's son of Burton Heath," appears "in the Induction to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*" !<sup>2</sup> This, it will be said, is a mere slip. Granted ; but there are some "slips" which cannot be made by a writer who has bestowed prolonged and adequate attention to the subject upon which he writes. An excellent

<sup>1</sup> The fact that they were rejected is, I think, confirmatory of the theory that Jonson was the true editor of the Folio. It is only necessary to read Digges' lines to see that Jonson would not have cared to publish them.

<sup>2</sup> His words are : "In the Induction to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, too, the chief characters are all from Stratford" (*Nineteenth Century*, April, 1909, p. 644).



example of this is afforded by "Mark Twain" who in his book, *Is Shakespeare dead?* (p. 58) writes as follows:—"For seven years after Shakespeare's death nobody seems to have been interested in him. Then the quarto was published, and Ben Jonson awoke out of his long indifference, and sang a song of praise, and put it in the front of the book." Now "the quarto," here, is a "mere slip" for "The Folio," but it is a slip which could not possibly have been made by one who had devoted much time and thought to the study of Shakespeare. Mark Twain, however, did not, I believe, make any claim to be regarded as a profound student of the great dramatist. Neither, as I confidently submit, could Sir Edward Sullivan have made such an extraordinary "slip" about a matter so extremely well-known to all Shakespearean students as the Induction to *The Taming of the Shrew*, if he had really any serious claim to be considered, as he evidently wishes us to think him, a "Shakespearean scholar." It would, I venture to say, have been impossible even for a humble writer like myself—one who has devoted a considerable amount of time and thought to the subject, but who makes no pretension to that title—to have perpetrated Sir Edward's very remarkable "howler." One might just as well talk of

*Lear's* famous soliloquy, "To be or not to be!"<sup>1</sup>

### Visor of Wincot

After this it is perhaps hardly necessary to mention that Sir Edward Sullivan quotes *2 Henry IV.*, v. i. to this effect; "I beseech you, Sir, to countenance William Visor of Wincot against Clement Perkes of the Hill," and tries to press it into his service as evidence in favour of the Stratfordian authorship, because "Wincot" is "the local pronunciation of Wilnecot, a Warwickshire town." Sir Edward, therefore, was obviously in total ignorance of the fact that all the Folios read "Woncot" in the place cited, while the quarto of 1600 reads "Woncote,"

<sup>1</sup> I really cannot omit to mention here a curious fact which illustrates in a striking manner the sort of treatment to which 'unorthodox' writers on the Shakespeare problem are apt to be subjected at editorial hands. In my article, under title "The Vindicators of Shakespeare," I especially called the reader's attention to this ridiculous blunder, and had drawn, as I thought I was entitled to draw, the same conclusion from it as that which I have indicated above. Will it be believed that the editorial pen was run through all this, and that, in lieu thereof, that same pen inserted the words, "without making undue capital out of the curious slip made by Sir Edward Sullivan in substituting *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for *The Taming of the Shrew*, etc., etc.?" (*Nineteenth Century*, June, 1909, p. 1,054). The alteration was, indeed, shown to me, but being desirous that my article should be published I had no option but to submit. The editor, if he chooses to interfere, is master of the situation.

"Wincot" being an altogether unwarranted conjecture of Malone's!<sup>1</sup>

### Augustin Nicolas

Such is the learned pundit who comes forward to instruct our ignorance on matters Shakespearean, and who affects to teach us as one in authority, and not as the scribes! Seemingly we must recognise the title of some of our *soi-disant* "men of letters" on evidence of the same description (and it is abundantly forthcoming) as that by which the excellence of Augustin Nicolas was so undeniably established; as witness the pregnant epitaph which was composed for him:—

Ci git Augustin Nicolas,  
Auteur de la première classe,  
Réformateur de Vaugelas,  
Rival de Virgile, et d' Horace.

<sup>1</sup> As further evidence (save the mark!) he tells us that "a family of the name of Sly resided" at Stratford "in the poet's time," upon which I ask him if he is unaware that "Sly" appears in the Induction to the old play *The Taming of a Shrew*, and whether he thinks that Shakespeare wrote this old play also? Whereupon he takes refuge in the fact that Shakespeare changed all the other names of the characters in the old play, but leaves Sly (or Slie) of the old Induction, the suggestion being that he did so because it is a Stratford name! As to "Wincot" I would refer the reader to Mr. George Hookham's article on "The Shakespearean Problem" in the *National Review* for January, 1909. Mr. Hookham shows the absurdity of the endeavour to make Stratfordian capital out of the two names.

Il méritoit le rang suprême,  
 C'étoit un homme enfin . . . . Hola.  
 De qui savez vous tout cela ?—  
 De qui je le sais ? *De lui-même !*

### My Courteous Critic

And now having given illustrations both of Sir Edward Sullivan's qualifications to instruct us upon Shakespeare, and of his controversial methods, I will give just one illustration of his courtesy.

Sir Edward has styled me "the new advocate of the Baconians,"<sup>1</sup> and has throughout referred to me as the author of a "Baconian" work, and the upholder of the "Baconian" hypothesis. Now I have expressly stated in the Preface to my book that I make no attempt whatever to support the "Baconian" theory; that I confine myself entirely to "the negative proposition, viz., that Shakspeare of Stratford was not the author of the *Plays and Poems*," and that "I have made no attempt to deal with the positive side of the question." Throughout my book, although I have naturally mentioned certain "Baconian" contentions, I have advanced no single argument in favour of the Baconian authorship, the fact being that I have hitherto preserved an altogether "agnostic" frame of mind on the question whether or not Francis Bacon had any

<sup>1</sup> *Nineteenth Century*, March, 1909, p. 433.

share in any of the plays which were collectively published in the Folio of 1623 as "The Works of Shakespeare." Sir Edward was well aware of all this, for not only has he, as his articles prove, read my rejoinder to Canon Beeching,<sup>1</sup> which leaves no possible room for doubt on this point, but shortly after the publication of his first article I wrote to him pointing out the error of which he had been guilty. His reply is, in effect, that he declines to accept my statement; that I am a person not worthy of belief; in other words that I am telling a deliberate lie. He writes in his last article (*Nineteenth Century* for August, 1909, p. 279), "next follows an expression of surprise at my including him [myself, to wit] amongst 'Baconians' after receipt of a letter in which he had pointed out the error of which I had been guilty. He is, however, careful to suppress all mention of my reply to that letter, a reply which I am aware he received, and in which I had noted all the passages in his book which justified me in assertions I had made as to his real attitude." This is really amazing. Sir Edward Sullivan's reply to my letter lies before me, and why he should imagine that I desire to "suppress" it I am

<sup>1</sup> *In re Shakespeare. Beeching v. Greenwood. Rejoinder on behalf of the defendant.* (John Lane).

totally at a loss to conceive. If it were worth while I should be happy to publish it *in extenso*. In it Sir Edward writes, "I am not aware that I have 'styled you a Baconian' as you put it"—this although he had styled me "the new advocate of the Baconians!" He, however, gives me references to pages of my book where, as he contends, I have put forward the theory of the Baconian authorship. On the strength of these passages, which are merely notices of Baconian arguments, and some of them obviously jocular (p. 259, *e.g.*) Sir Edward now declines to accept my word upon a matter which is not within his knowledge and which is peculiarly within mine. I really think he does himself less than justice. He must, surely, know that controversy among gentlemen is not, and cannot be, with any decency, conducted on such lines. *Est quodam prodire tenus sed non datur ultra*. In marked contrast with this attitude on the part of Sir Edward is that of Canon Beeching, who, as I should have imagined any gentleman would, at once accepted my statement and expressed his regret at having misapprehended my position in this matter. (*Nineteenth Century*, August, 1902, p. 283).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is, of course, a matter of very little concern to me that I should be made a Baconian *malgré moi*. The explanation is

Then Sir Edward writes (*Ibid.* p. 280): "I am told by this supersensitive iconoclast that I accuse him of deliberately stating what he knows to be false, *an assertion based upon my having said that 'he does not seem to have come across' a record connected with the spelling of Shakespeare's name, to be found in the accounts of Lady Southampton.*<sup>2</sup> The construction which he puts upon my simple English may be ranked with some notable misinterpretations which he has before given of passages from the works of more distinguished writers than myself."

That is, if possible, more amazing still. I wrote (*Nineteenth Century*, June, 1909, p. 1,052) with reference to some remarks of Sir Edward's, "Now, seeing that Sir Edward Sullivan has, by necessary implication, given me 'the lie direct,' that he should complain of departure from

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not far to seek. The fact is that just as a few years ago a rationalistic writer on theological matters was always styled an "atheist" by orthodox disputants, because a stigma was supposed to be attached to the word; so at the present time every critic who is sceptical as to the received authorship of the Shakespearean plays is at once dubbed a "Baconian" by the high priests and Pharisees of the Stratfordian faith, because the appellation is taken by many to connote "faddist" and "fanatic," and it is so much more easy to call a man names than to confute his arguments. Whether the name is properly bestowed or not is immaterial. *Magna est falsitas et praevalabit!*

<sup>2</sup> My italics.

literary courtesy far outdoes the proverbial instance of the Gracchi complaining of sedition." *How* he had, "by necessary implication, given me the lie direct," I had already explained, and I have again explained above. It had nothing whatever to do, as surely Sir Edward must have known, with his statement about the record to be found in Lady Southampton's accounts. As I had said nothing whatever about this record till it had been alluded to by Sir Edward Sullivan himself in the August number of the Review, it was quite obvious that I could not possibly have asserted that he had given me the lie direct with regard to it. I made no statement, therefore I could have told no lie. No ; it is Sir Edward himself who has chosen to go out of his way in order to put upon my very "simple English" a crooked misconstruction which may be ranked as *primus inter pares* among many "notable misinterpretations" to be found in the writings of this Augustin Nicolas *redivivus*.

#### **Lady Southampton's Accounts**

And as I have thus had occasion to make mention of Sir Edward's reference to Lady Southampton's accounts (so-called), I will at once deal with that matter, which will give the reader yet another opportunity of judging of this superior



critic's qualifications to instruct the world on the Shakespeare problem.

"The new advocate of the Baconians," wrote Sir Edward (*Nineteenth Century*, March, 1909, p. 433), "in his examination of the evidence, does not seem to have come across a record of interest and importance which is to be found in the accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber, drawn up by the Countess of Southampton, where 'William Shakespeare' is mentioned as the name of the actor who played before the Queen on two occasions in December, 1594. And yet the Countess may be presumed to have known something of the individual who had just dedicated his two great poems to her own son. But such are Mr. Greenwood's methods; and one is left to wonder what kind of audience he really believes himself to be addressing."

Well, I fondly supposed that I was addressing an audience of fair-minded men, who would not allow their prejudices to misconstrue what I wrote. I can assure the reader, who I do not think will accuse me, as Sir Edward Sullivan has done, of deliberately stating what I know to be false,<sup>1</sup> that I was quite familiar with the

<sup>1</sup> I so wrote in the *Nineteenth Century* of June, 1909, at p. 1,044. The reference, of course, is to Sir Edward's refusal to accept my statement as to my attitude towards the Baconian theory, as already explained at length.

entry to which he refers in the accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber. I have before me a copy of that entry in Mr. D. H. Lambert's "Shakespeare Documents," marked by me before I had even heard the renowned name of Sir Edward Sullivan. I did not think it necessary to make reference to it in my book because it is a well-known fact, which I have never disputed, that the name of the man who wrote himself "Shakspere" was at times written "Shakespeare" in contemporary documents.

But this entry, says my critic, was "drawn up by the Countess of Southampton," and "the Countess may be presumed to have known something of the individual who had just dedicated his two great poems to her son." Very likely; but who that individual was is exactly the question at issue. Sir Edward Sullivan quietly begs that question, just as he does when he tells us (p. 431) that if we want to know the precise amount of knowledge of Greek and Latin acquired by Shakspere of Stratford "our best source of information is the works themselves" !

But a word more as to this "account" alleged to have been "drawn up by the Countess of Southampton." What are the real facts as to that matter? The entry referred to occurs in a roll of the Pipe Office "declared accounts,"

which contains the accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber from September, 1579 to July, 1596. These accounts were engrossed year by year by one of the Clerks in the Pipe Office, and signed by the Accountant in each year, or period of years. Now on May 2nd, 1594, Mary, widow of Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, married Sir Thomas Heneage, Vice-Chamberlain to Queen Elizabeth, and Treasurer of the Queen's Chamber. It was her husband's duty, therefore, to render the accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber. But he died on October 17th, 1595, and it seems that no "declared accounts" had at that date been rendered since September 29th, 1592. The Queen, therefore, as is recited on the roll, issued her warrant to the Countess, as widow and executrix of the late Treasurer, commanding her to render the account, which she duly did from September 29th, 1592, to November 30th, 1595. The entry, therefore, of March 15th, 1594-5 (which is the entry in question) had, no doubt, been prepared by Sir Thomas Heneage, or rather, by one of the clerks in the office of the Treasurer of the Chamber, and was sent in to the Pipe Office by his executrix according to the Queen's command. Further than this there appears to be no connection whatever between the Countess and Shakspeare of

Stratford. Had Sir Edward Sullivan been aware of these facts I hardly think he would have written that portentous passage about these official accounts being "drawn up" by the Countess of Southampton. As to the entry in question the probability is that she never even saw it.<sup>1</sup>

**"The Defamers of Shakespeare" !**

As already mentioned, Sir Edward has classed me, together with a distinguished scholar and lawyer, the late Judge Webb,<sup>2</sup> among those whom he is pleased to style "the defamers of Shakespeare." I should feel more resentment at this odious appellation if it were not so palpably absurd.

For how, pray, have I defamed Shakespeare, or what Shakespeare have I defamed? Not certainly the immortal poet for whom I have expressed unbounded admiration. No, the real defamers of "Shakespeare" are the men who

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted for much of the above information to the courtesy of Mr. S. R. Scargill Bird, Assistant Keeper and Secretary of the Public Record Office. Sir Edward in his last onslaught has very prudently said nothing in reply to this tolerably complete demonstration that these accounts do not, as he had fondly imagined from imperfect acquaintance with the history and nature of the documents, show any connection whatever between Shakspeare of Stratford and the Countess.

<sup>2</sup> Judge Webb was a Fellow of Trinity College and Regius Professor of Laws and Public Orator in the University of Dublin.

wrote, and the men who have repeated with approval, those preposterous lines which tell us that the bard who is not of an age but for all time,

For gain not glory, winged his roving flight,  
And grew immortal in his own despite.

And it was the same man, we may remember (and he has been followed by all the *servum pecus* of literature), who, like a wasp stinging among flowers, left on record of another immortal of that golden age the malignantly perverted judgment that he was,

The wisest, brightest, *meanest* of mankind.

But if I have not defamed Shakespeare the poet, can I be said to have defamed Shakspeare, the Stratford player? I deny it absolutely. The defamers of Shakspeare of Stratford (unless, indeed, what they have recorded is "true in substance and in fact"), can be none other than the old note-collectors, and memoir-writers, such as those reverend gentlemen, John Ward, and William Fulman, and Richard Davies; such as John Aubrey, and Nicholas Rowe, and John Manningham, and the later biographers who have accepted and repeated the stories, sometimes far from edifying, which these chroniclers and diarists have related concerning the man who is so generally identified with the "Swan of Avon." Yet were it not for such stories none

of the so-called "Lives" of Shakespeare could have been written; and to accuse a modern critic of "defamation" because he re-states them and makes inquiry as to their value and their consequence, is manifestly ridiculous. For my part I may say that so far from adopting such anecdotes and traditions in an uncritical spirit, I have been constrained by legal considerations to cast the gravest doubt upon the story of Shakspeare's deer-stealing escapade (to take an example), although to have accepted it as true, following in the wake of Mr. Sidney Lee, and other orthodox authorities, would obviously have suited me much better in view of the case which I had to present. Nor have I laid any stress at all upon the tales of Shakspeare's hard-drinking propensities, for which, nevertheless, tradition furnishes us with some testimony, which cannot be altogether set aside as a *quantité négligeable*.

How then, I ask once more, have I been guilty of the crime I am charged withal? Well, if to argue that William Shakspeare of Stratford did not write *Venus and Adonis*, and *Love's Labour's Lost*, and the *Sonnets*, and *Hamlet*, is to "defame Shakespeare," then, indeed, I must admit that Sir Edward Sullivan may be justified in the title of calculated offence which he has chosen for his articles. And just as sensible (and just as silly)

would it be to charge those who dispute the proposition, once universally accepted, that a certain "blind old man of Scio's rocky isle" wrote both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* with being defamers of Homer! We are, it seems, defamers of Moses if we deny that he wrote the Pentateuch, and defamers of St. Paul if we deny that he wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews! But I need not longer delay over this portentous charge, for it is quite obvious that Sir Edward Sullivan has merely chosen an *ad captandum* title, importing an accusation which itself, as I venture to submit, falls within the limits of literary libel.

The fact remains, as I have already written, that with regard to the life story of Shakspeare of Stratford, as the biographers have handed it down to us, "from first to last there is not one creditable act in the whole of it,—not a single act indicative of a generous, high-minded, and great-souled man, not one such act that has a jot or tittle of evidence to support it." This, surely, is a fact that we must all deplore. Possibly the biographers have done the man an injustice, but, if so, it is they, and not we of the "unorthodox" school, who are responsible for it. And if it should be established that the difficulty which Hallam so strongly felt, viz., in "identifying the young man who came up from Stratford,

was afterwards an indifferent player in a London theatre, and returned to his native place in middle life, with the author of *Macbeth and Lear*," is one that we are no longer called upon to contemplate, and that this man of the barren and banal life-story is not, in truth and in fact, the immortal poet whom none has dared defame, and at whose shrine we all must worship, then shall we have amply earned the title of "The Vindicators of Shakespeare."<sup>1</sup>

Let us now resume the consideration of some of Sir Edward Sullivan's pronouncements. We find this latest champion of the orthodox Stratfordian faith casting about, as so many have done before him, for analogous cases to that of Shakspeare (on the assumption that Shakspeare the player and Shakespeare the author are identical), and he thinks he has found a very remarkable parallel in the case of Plautus; nay, he even affects surprise that none of the "Baconians," amongst whom, *more suo*, he particularly refers to Judge Webb and myself,

<sup>1</sup> To write, as Sir E. Sullivan does, of "a literary controversy [*sic*] directed to the dethronement of our greatest English poet," seems to me simply childish. Shakespeare the poet is enthroned for as long as the English tongue shall be known. The question is, Who was the poet? Sir Edward in this, as in other places, merely begs the question at issue. And how can the "controversy" be directed to the dethronement of the poet?



has made any allusion to "so singular a parallel, and so curious an anticipation in its main features, of the so-called mystery surrounding Shakespeare's career and work." Well, I cannot speak for the Judge, and unhappily he is not here to speak for himself; but I imagine that he made no reference to Plautus because he was of the same opinion as I am with regard to this supposed "parallel," viz., that the fancied analogy between his case and Shakspeare's (assuming the identity of player and poet) does not, in fact, hold good.

#### "Genius" and "Environment"

But before I deal with the case of Plautus, let me put before the reader the proposition in illustration of which the example of the Latin dramatist is cited by Sir Edward Sullivan. "The truth is," he writes, "for all that may be said to the contrary, that pre-eminence in the world of literature is not, and never will be, the monopoly of the educated or the high-born." Nothing could more clearly show than this sentence how entirely this new Stratfordian protagonist has failed to understand the arguments advanced by those who believe with Hallam that player Shakspeare was not the real Shakespeare of the *Plays and Poems*. Nobody, so far as I know, has ever been so idiotic as to maintain that pre-

eminence in the world of literature is "the monopoly of the educated or the high born," nor can I conceive that any useful purpose is subserved by that method of controversy which consists in ignoring the real contentions of one's opponent in order to trample upon foolish arguments attributed to but never in fact advanced by him.

"No man who is not either well educated or high-born can possibly become a great poet"! Such is the proposition which Sir Edward Sullivan would fain put into my mouth, knowing that a thousand instances are vociferous to the contrary.

### **The Case of Burns**

Let me endeavour to state once more what is the true nature of the argument put forward in this connection by myself and others of the "unorthodox" school. That a man of humble birth and very imperfect education may rise to the highest ranks of literature is one of the notorious facts of human history. Take the constantly cited case of the "Ayrshire ploughman," for example, with which I have dealt in my book on *The Shakespeare Problem*, under the head of *Shakspeare and "Genius."* Here, if ever, we find an instructive example of what can be achieved in the realm of poetry by a man

lowly born, and, although by no means left in ignorance, still with a very moderate educational equipment. From the days of my boyhood the poetry of Burns, so graphic in description, so terrible in satire, so tender in the most exquisite of love songs, has been to me a wonder and a delight. But wherein is it that Burns so much excelled? He gives us *The Holy Fair*, and *Tam O'Shanter*, and *The Jolly Beggars*, and he gives us his immortal songs. "The Ayrshire Ploughman sings of the scenes in which he has been bred; of the burn and the heather; of the sweeping Nith and the banks and braes of bonny Doon. He sings of the Scotch peasantry, of their customs, as in 'Halloween,' and, above all, of the sweet Scotch lassies, whom he loved not wisely but too well. And all this in his own homely dialect. The very genius of lyrical poetry speaks from his mouth, but speaks in that Scottish language for the interpretation of which the English reader requires a glossary. 'He is only insipid when he tries to adopt the conventional English of his time,' says a writer in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. 'When he essayed to write in metropolitan English,' says Principal Shairp, 'he was seldom more than a third-rate,—a common, clever versifier.'"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, p. 76.

And now, perhaps, the real point may dawn upon the mind of Sir Edward Sullivan, who has hitherto so strangely missed it. The question is not whether a man of lowly birth and of imperfect education can, if naturally endowed by genius, write high-class poetry. The question is, what *kind* of poetry will he be able to write? If, for instance, Burns had written such a poem as *Venus and Adonis*, we might have had a real parallel between his case and the supposed case of Shakspeare the player-poet. "Had Burns, say at the age of twenty-five, written highly polished and cultured English, abounding with classical allusions, showing intimate knowledge of Court life and fashionable society, and dealing in such a life-like manner with foreign countries as to lead readers to suppose that he must have paid a visit to their shores; had he discussed divine philosophy for all the ages and for every phase of human life; had he held the mirror for mankind—had the Ayrshire ploughman done all this and a great deal more, then indeed there might have been some analogy between his case and that of Shakespeare," according to the received hypothesis.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I have ventured to quote from my book *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, chap. iii. (pp. 76-77). How anybody who had done me the honour of reading this chapter could imagine that I had put forward such an absurd proposition as Sir Edward

**The Case of Bunyan**

Adopting, then, Sir Edward Sullivan's formula, we may say, "the truth is, for all that may be said to the contrary," that a man who does not know a word of Latin can never give us a satisfactory translation of Ovid! In other words, the possibilities of genius do not transcend all natural laws, but, marvellous though they be, are necessarily limited by the facts of education, knowledge, and environment. A very apt illustration of my meaning is afforded by an example supplied to us by Sir Edward Sullivan himself, namely, that of John Bunyan, whom he styles "the ill-taught tinker son of a tinker father."

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Sullivan would fain make me responsible for, I am utterly at a loss to conceive. I fear, too, that such a busy and prolific writer as Mr. G. K. Chesterton was unable to find time to give close attention to it. Had he done so he would not have made the wild statement that it is incumbent upon me to "try and prove that there never were really any geniuses who arose out of ignorance and poverty"; nor, I may add, would he have represented me as putting forward certain facts of Shakspeare's early life and its environment (necessarily repeated in every biographical sketch) as though they constituted serious arguments on the question of authorship. (See *The Illustrated London News*, March 13th, 1909). But I have dealt with this latter point in my Rejoinder to Canon Beeching. (See *In re Shakespeare*, chap. ii.). As to Mr. Chesterton's statement that I desire "on most exclusive social grounds, to transfer Shakspeare's glory to Lord Verulam," it is so preposterously at variance with all that I have written that I can only suppose he dreamt it during some literary nightmare, or in a day dream

This, of course, suggests a very low origin, and the reader at once imagines the Bunyans, father and son, roaming over the country with pans and kettles slung across their shoulders, the Autolycci of the tin-pot trade. As a fact, however, neither the one nor the other belonged to the vagrant tribe. The Bunyans were steady handicraftsmen dwelling in their own freehold tenements. Both Thomas and his son John had a settled home at Elstow, where their forge and workshop were. Thomas in his will designates himself a "brasier." John followed the same calling, and was what at the present day we should call a "whitesmith."<sup>1</sup> As everybody knows, he was noted in his youth for being a profane swearer, but he was "converted" after his marriage, gave up swearing and "blaspheming," and took to preaching, which led to his arrest and an imprisonment of some twelve years in Bedford County Gaol. During the earlier part of this incarceration, however, he was allowed much liberty. He was permitted to preach, and even went "to see Christians in London." He saturated himself with constant and copious draughts from that well of pure and undefiled English, the Bible, and, together with the Bible, we know that *Foxe's Book of*

<sup>1</sup> See Canon Venables in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

*Martyrs* was his constant companion. It is further known that he had ample opportunity for reading other books of a religious and controversial character. It is futile, therefore, for Sir Edward Sullivan to talk of " 'the bookless neighbourhood' of Bedford Gaol." But the point is that Bunyan wrote exactly what we should have expected him to write, given his peculiar genius, his temperament, his life-story, his reading, and his environment. If instead of the *Pilgrim's Progress* he had written *Euphues*, then indeed would there have been some analogy between his case and that of the "Stratford rustic," (I thank the late Dr. Garnett for teaching me that word), who, as we are told, threw off *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *The Comedy of Errors*, *currente calamo*, all within two or three years of his arrival in town a penniless wanderer from his provincial home! The case of John Bunyan is the very case I should myself have selected as an illustration of the very rational proposition that the output of genius is controlled by the circumstances of its environment, and is not, as some seem to think (contrary to all human experience), something in the nature of "a first cause," superior to and independent of all the influences by which it is surrounded.

**The Case of Plautus**

And now let me examine the wonderful parallel which Sir Edward Sullivan thinks he has found in the case of Plautus. "This comedian, the greatest known to Rome," says Sir Edward, "was born at Sarsina in Umbria, B.C. 254, in an extremely low grade of life." I should much like to know his authority for the "extremely low grade of life." As a matter of fact we have no knowledge at all of the birth, early life, or education of M. Accius Plautus, though it seems probable that he came to Rome while still young, and "acquired there his complete mastery of the most idiomatic Latin."<sup>1</sup> But, continues Sir Edward Sullivan, he came to Rome "in a needy condition, and, like Shakespeare, found his first employment at the theatre, where he filled the humble office of a handy man for actors, or a stage carpenter." Again I ask, where is the authority for the "needy condition?" It is likely enough that Plautus, when he first came to Rome, was not overburdened with money, but we really have no evidence to that effect. And where does Sir Edward get his "humble office of a handy-man for actors, or a stage carpenter?" He refers us, it is true, to Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography*, and

<sup>1</sup> See an excellent article in *Chambers' Encyclopædia*.



the Dictionary refers us to Varro ; but we know what Varro said about Plautus only through the medium of Aulus Gellius, and what Aulus Gellius tells us, on the authority of Varro and others, is that Plautus made money as a scenic artist, or architect, which enabled him to leave Rome and embark in business on his own account in the way of foreign trade, but, his speculations proving unsuccessful, he lost all his capital, and came back to Rome in such a penniless condition that he had to seek employment in the service of a baker, where he earned his living by turning a handmill. While thus employed he wrote, according to the legend, three plays, just as Nævius is said to have composed two dramas in prison.<sup>1</sup> By the sale of these plays, says Sir Edward Sullivan, "he was enabled to quit his drudgery, educate himself, and start on a literary career." Here the words "educate

<sup>1</sup>The passage referred to in Aulus Gellius (*Noctes Atticae*, iii. 3) is as follows:—"Sed enim Saturionem, et Addictum, et tertiam quandam cujus nunc mihi nomen non suppetit, in pistrino eum scripsisse Varro et plerique alii memoriae tradiderunt, cum pecuniâ omni, quam in operis artificum scenicorum pepereret in mercationibus perditâ, inops Romam redisset, et ob quaerendum victum ad circumagendas molas, quae trusatiles appellantur, operam pistori locasset ; sicuti de Naevio quoque accepimus fabulas eum in carcere duas scripsisse, Hariolum et Leontem." I find nothing here about "a handy-man for actors," nor do I think our scenic artists would much care to be called "stage carpenters."

himself" are quietly inserted by Sir Edward in order to assist his fancied "parallel." Shakspeare is supposed to have educated himself in London, though there is not a jot or tittle of evidence to support the supposition. Similarly Plautus is here alleged to have "educated" himself, though there is no shadow of authority to that effect. For all we know he was quite sufficiently educated already. Moreover his life when engaged in mercantile transactions supplied him with much useful education. "His plays evince close familiarity with seafaring life and adventure, and an intimate knowledge of all the details of buying and selling and keeping accounts,—experience probably acquired during this period." And again, as Mr. Sellar writes, "The story told of his unsuccessful mercantile speculations might seem to derive confirmation from the 'flavour of the sea,' and the spirit of adventure, present in many of his plays, from his frequent colloquial use of Greek phrases, and from indications of familiarity with the sights, manners, and pleasures of the Greek cities of the Mediterranean."<sup>1</sup> And what was the character of his literary work? Plautus wrote as a man of the

<sup>1</sup> Shakspeare of Stratford, we must remember, according to all the evidence we have, never left his native shores. See Lee's *Life*, Illustrated Edition, p. 40.

people writing for the people. "The genius of Plautus," says Mr. Sellar, "appealed to the taste and temperament of the mass of the people." He was "a man of strong animal spirits, and large intercourse with the world, especially with the trading and middle classes. *We find no indication of familiarity with the manners, tastes, or ideas of the governing aristocracy.*" Moreover, "his heroines show that Plautus was more familiar with the ways of 'libertinæ' than of Roman ladies." He borrows plots, incidents, scenes, and characters from the new Comedy of Athens, but he "shows no feeling for nature, though he is fond of describing the sea in calm and storm." He writes "simply with the wish to represent the humours of human life, and to amuse the people in their holiday mood. There is no trace of any serious purpose behind his humorous scenes, and representations of character." "He always writes as a townsman, familiar with city life, especially among freedmen, craftsmen, and the middle classes."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "We are told, moreover," writes Sir Edward Sullivan, "that his plays, like those of Shakespeare, were written for the stage, and that 'content with the applause of his contemporaries and the pay which he received,' he did not care for the subsequent fate of his works." Sir Edward thus definitely throws in his lot with the "for gain not glory" party, and thinks that Shakespeare wrote his plays "for the stage" only, and not for the reader's study. But this, as I hold, is to be in reality a "de-

Such, then, was the dramatist of whom Sir Edward Sullivan writes that "his literary career was in every sense the equal of Shakespeare's," and between whose case and that of Shakspeare, the alleged "player, playmaker and poet," he finds so close and so remarkable a parallel. Yet on examination it is seen that this supposed parallel vanishes into thin air. In Plautus we have a man of whom it is impossible to say that he had received no sufficient education in his youth, simply because we have no evidence to that effect. What resources he had when he came to Rome we do not know. We read, indeed, that he made money as a scenic artist or artificer, that he embarked on mercantile speculations, failed, and returned to Rome, where he had to support life for a time in a humble manner.

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famer of Shakespeare." In my humble judgment, the truth lies with the great poet and critic who has so recently departed from among us, when he writes, "Scene by scene, line by line, stroke upon stroke, and touch after touch, he went over all the old laboured ground again, and not to ensure success in his own day, and fill his pockets with contemporary pence, but merely and wholly with a purpose to make it worthy of himself and *his future students*. . . . Not one single alteration in the whole play [of Hamlet] can possibly have been made *with a view to stage effect*, or, to present popularity and profit. . . Every change in the text of Hamlet *has impaired its fitness for the stage, and increased its value for the closet in exact and perfect proportion*." Such, says Swinburne, was the Shakespeare who, according to superficial critics, wrote "for the stage" only!

He is a man of genius, and he had acquired a mastery of idiomatic Latin. He turns dramatist, takes his plots from the new Attic comedy, but turns his own experience in mercantile adventure, and on the sea, to excellent account. He writes for the masses, and simply to amuse them and give them pleasure, without any serious purpose behind his scenes or in his characters. He shows no knowledge at all of the manners, tastes, or ideas of the aristocracy. He is familiar with the ways of *cocottes*, and women of easy virtue, but of Roman ladies he knows but little. He shows no feeling for nature. I can see no analogy here with the case of the "Stratford rustic" who became, *per saltum* as we are told, the world's poet, teacher, and philosopher. Did Shakespeare, then, we may ask, write for the masses only, and without any serious purpose? Was *he* ignorant of the manners, tastes, and ideas of the aristocracy? Was he not, on the contrary, the most aristocratic and undemocratic of poets? Could *he* write only of courtesans and *cocottes*, and not of ladies highly-born, cultured, and refined? Does *he* "show no feeling for nature?" The supposed parallel breaks down at every point. Moreover, it is seen that there is really little that is extraordinary in the case of Plautus, who has all the limitations of his environment, whereas

the case of Shakspeare is nothing less than a modern miracle,—that is if Shakspeare and Shakespeare are one ! <sup>1</sup>

“ Shakspeare ” or “ Shakespeare ? ”

But now, leaving the vain search for “ Parallels ” let us see what arguments Sir Edward Sullivan has to adduce, or, rather, how he meets those which I have ventured to put forward. He, of course, trots out once more the time-honoured joke to the effect that “ Shakespeare was not written by Shakespeare but by another gentleman of the same name,” and, so enamoured is he of this well-known little jibe, that he serves it up a second time, like *crambe repetita*, within the limits of ten lines. My contention, however, as he well knows, is that it was a man not of the same, but of quite different name, who published under

<sup>1</sup> In the first edition of his “ Reply ” to my book, Canon Beeching adduced the case of Michael Drayton whom he called another Warwickshire butcher’s son,” as an alleged parallel to that of Shakspeare. I venture to think that I entirely disposed of that imaginary parallel in my rejoinder to the Canon (*In re Shakespeare*, pp. 49-52). But I need not now labour that point because Canon Beeching has frankly told us that he, very wisely as I think, withdrew the suggested parallel in the second edition of his book, which I have not had the pleasure to see, and of the publication of which I was in ignorance. Meantime, Sir Edward Sullivan had caught at and adopted this idea from “ the Canon’s mouth,” with more eagerness than discretion, and no doubt he still fondly clings to his so hastily adopted infant. *He* is not the man to withdraw ! At all which, we of the unorthodox faith may be allowed to smile.

the pen-name of "Shake-speare." But then, says Sir Edward, "Mr. Greenwood rests his case so strongly on the spelling of the name that he tells us in his 'Notice to the Reader' that all through his book he writes 'Shakespeare' when he is speaking of the author of the *Plays and Poems*, and 'Shakspere' when he refers to the Stratford Player." Now my "Notice to the Reader" is as follows:—"In this work I have followed the convenient practice of writing 'Shakespeare' where I am speaking of the author of the *Plays and Poems*, and 'Shakspere' where I refer to William Shakspere of Stratford, *whether he was or was not the author in question.*" If Sir Edward had quoted these words, as, in common fairness, he ought to have quoted them, the reader of his article would have seen that I adopt this spelling simply for convenience, in order to avoid confusion and periphrasis. I will not here again enter upon the question of the various spellings of the name, because I have fully explained my position on that matter in my Rejoinder to Canon Beeching, and if the reader will do me the honour to refer to the first chapter of that little work, he will see just how much, and how little, importance I attach to this question of spelling and how untrue it is to say that I rest my case upon it.<sup>1</sup> He will

<sup>1</sup> See *In re Shakespeare*, Ch. I.

see, too, that from my point of view, it is quite immaterial that the man who wrote his name "Shakspere," was at times called "Shakespeare" by his contemporaries, though to Walter Roche, ex-master of the Stratford Grammar School, he was "Shaxbere," to Richard Quiney, his fellow-townsmen, he was "Shackspere," to Abraham Sturley, his "fellow-countryman," he was "Shaxsper," to Thomas Whittington, of Shottery, he was "Shaxpere," and in the marriage-bond of November, 1582, he is "Shagspere."\*

### The First Folio

But now let us fairly face the problem of the First Folio, which I venture to think Sir Edward Sullivan has not yet appreciated.

Sir Edward makes a belated and desperate attempt to prove that the Cambridge editors were altogether wrong in saying that the "setters forth" of the Folio are manifestly guilty, in their preface "to the great variety of Readers," of a *suggestio falsi* with regard to the manuscripts from which they printed. He would fain have us think, in the face of all the evidence to the contrary, that the "copies" of which they made use were indeed "Cur'd and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he [Shakespeare] conceived them," and he denies that there

\* See note on the name "Shakespeare," at end.



is any suggestion made by the "setters forth" that they had either collected or received Shakespeare's own manuscripts for the purpose of the edition.<sup>1</sup> Well, the Preface speaks for itself, and I think every unprejudiced reader thereof must be brought to the same conclusion as those distinguished scholars, the Cambridge editors. But it shows no little audacity on the part of Sir Edward Sullivan, that he should here appeal to "Dr. Sidney Lee's most admirable Introduction to his Facsimile Reproduction" of the Folio (p. 631 n.). For what says Dr. Sidney Lee on the point at issue? "Clearly they (the writers of the Preface) wished to suggest that the printers worked exclusively from Shakespeare's undefiled autograph." (p. xvii.). So that the prophet whom Sir Edward summoned to bless him has cursed him altogether!<sup>2</sup> Moreover he

<sup>1</sup> Sir Edward informs us, in a note, that the Cambridge editors of 1863 were Messrs. W. G. Clark and John Glover (names not unknown among Shakespearean scholars), but he omits to add that when, in that year, Mr. Glover left Cambridge, that distinguished scholar, Mr. Aldis Wright, became associated with Mr. Clark in the editorship; that his name appears on the title page of the second volume (1863); that the edition was re-issued in 1887 and 1891; and that Mr. Aldis Wright has never repudiated responsibility for the preface, or intimated his dissent from any part of its contents. See note facing title-page of Vol. II. of the 1891 Edition, signed "William Aldis Wright."

<sup>2</sup> Sir Edward replies to this that he referred to Mr. Lee's Introduction "in a footnote connected with a different point." In his article (*Nineteenth Century*, April, 1909, p. 631) I read

has omitted to mention that that excellent and deservedly respected critic, Dr. Ingleby, says the same thing. "Unfortunately for their credit and our satisfaction, their prefatory statement contains, or at least suggests, what they must have known to be false. They would lead us to believe that their edition was printed from Shakespeare's manuscripts. . . . Now we have positive knowledge of a fact inconsistent with this excerpt." (Shakespeare, *The Man and the Book*, p. 66).

So that we have the Cambridge Editors, Dr. Ingleby, and Dr. Sidney Lee, in full agreement on this point, while Sir Edward Sullivan, to suit the exigencies of his argument, is content to wage war against the leading authorities on his own side. But really this will not do. It is a case where *res ipsa loquitur*. And, in harmony with the statements in the Preface, the Folio title-

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"Besides, they (the players who are supposed to have written the Preface to the First Folio) would not speak of having 'collected' his (Shakespeare's) writings, if he had supplied them with copy." To this the following note is appended;—"Those who wish to understand the full meaning of 'the care and pain' involved in 'collecting' the material for the First Folio should read Dr. Sidney Lee's most admirable Introduction to his Facsimile Reproduction of that volume." Of course I do not suggest that because Sir Edward Sullivan agrees with Dr. Lee on certain points, therefore he is bound to accept all his conclusions, but Dr. Lee's "Admirable Introduction" being thus appealed to by Sir Edward, it is quite relevant to point out that on the particular point of the *suggestio falsi* Dr. Lee is altogether against him.

page informs us that the plays are "published according to the true *originall* copies," while, above the names of "the Principall Actors," we read that the volume contains "all his [Shakespeare's] Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies; Truly set forth according to their first ORIGINAL."<sup>1</sup>

Now it seems perfectly clear that this Preface, although signed by John Heminge and Henry Condell, was, in reality, written by Ben Jonson. Malone proved that to demonstration, in my humble judgment, as to the greater part of it, and old Ben was not the man to write half a Preface and leave the other half to somebody else. Besides, the same hand can be traced throughout.

"Honest Ben," therefore, as it appears, thought himself justified in writing, as indeed was the fashion of the times, a literary puff for these collected dramas which was not strictly in accordance with the facts.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sir Edward refers to this as "a small point which is 'pos-tered' in very large capitals by Mr. Greenwood," being apparently unaware that it so appears in the Folio itself!

<sup>2</sup> As to the unblotted manuscripts we may compare what Humphrey Moseley wrote in the introduction to the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio of 1647:—"Whatever I have seen of Mr. Fletcher's own hand is free from interlining, and his friends affirm that he never writ any one thing twice." This is much the same as "the Players," according to Jonson, said about Shakespeare. It seems to have passed into common form.

As to the question, asked in tones of well-assumed indignation, "Do you then, accuse 'Honest Ben' of telling a deliberate lie?" I will reply to that later on, when I come to deal with Canon Beeching's criticism. But let us now further consider all that, according to the most orthodox critics, is concealed under this name "Shakespeare."

### Many Pens contributed to the Folio

The Folio of 1623 contains thirty-six plays, all of which purport to be the work of "William Shakespeare." Does anybody believe this at the present day? Yes, many "Baconians" do so, because it is generally, I apprehend, an accepted article of the "Baconian" faith, that Francis Bacon wrote all that is contained in the First Folio, and I, whom certain critics and reviewers persist, with scant regard for either courtesy or justice, in making a "Baconian" *malgré moi*, have frequently been taken to task by members of that cult for asserting my conviction that the work of many pens is to be found in that sacred volume, and that "Shakespeare" is, in fact, a "noun of multitude."

But for this conviction I have the warrant of the highest "orthodox" authority. What said the late Dr. Garnett, for example? "It may

surprise some of my hearers to be told that so considerable a part of the work which passes under Shakespeare's name is probably not from his hand."<sup>1</sup> To begin with, there is overwhelming authority for the view that *Titus Andronicus* is not *Shakespearean* at all. As Hallam long ago remarked, "*res ipsa per se vociferatur*" to the contrary. Then it seems tolerably clear that very little of Parts II. and III. of *Henry VI.* are by Shakespeare, and none at all of Part I. Two, if not three, pens are to be traced in *Troilus and Cressida*; much of *The Taming of the Shrew* is not Shakespeare's,<sup>2</sup> and the same may be said of *Timon of Athens*, and, according to most critics, of *Richard III.* Some parts of *Macbeth* are commonly ascribed to Middleton. And we are assured, with much probability, that a very large part, and that some of the very best, of *Henry VIII.*, including Buckingham's noble and pathetic speech, and Wolsey's reflections on his fall, are not by Shakespeare, but by Fletcher. And this by no means exhausts the list of the non-Shakespearean

<sup>1</sup> Preface to *At Shakespeare's Shrine*, by Chas. F. Forshaw, LL.D.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Grant White, cited with approval by Dr. Furnivall, wrote, "*In the Taming of the Shrew*, three hands at least are traceable; that of the author of the old play, that of Shakspeare himself, and that of a co-labourer." See the facsimile edition of the old play by Charles Praetorius, with Forewords by Dr. Furnivall.

portions of "Shakespeare," according to critics of no mean standing. And for all these other authors, whose work was thus included in the Folio, "Shakespeare" was but a pseudonym or *nom de plume* ! And must not the "setters-forth" have known this ? Must not Jonson have known it ? Did they, then, tell "deliberate lies" in passing off all this non-Shakespearean work as Shakespeare's ? And what of the two Earls, the Incomparable Pair (one of them the Lord Chamberlain of the time), to whom the Folio was dedicated ? "If the heretical contention be well founded," says Sir Edward Sullivan, "we have two noble conspirators introduced, one of them being the patron of the company for which Shakespeare [*i.e.*, Shakspeare] acted and wrote. Can anyone, we may ask, be imagined to have been more familiar with the internal affairs of the stage at the time, outside the dramatists and players, than the Lord Chamberlain ? Did these two gentlemen accept a lying dedication without protest ? " Well, they seem to have accepted with tolerable equanimity the dedication of a volume which purported to contain all the works of Shakespeare, and nothing that was not the work of Shakespeare, which, nevertheless, contained (as being so "familiar with the internal affairs of the stage," they must, surely, have known) the work of

many other writers published under that well-known and comprehensive name ! Perhaps they were not quite so "unco good and rigidly righteous" as Sir Edward Sullivan. Perhaps they looked upon this literary latitudinarianism as falling short of "deliberate lying." Or, perhaps they did not concern themselves to think at all about the matter. And this latter supposition is, I fancy, by far the most probable one.

### **The Burbages and the Earl of Pembroke**

But here we are confronted with a question which has often been asked, but to which, so far as I am aware, no answer has yet been given. The hypothesis is that in 1623 Shakspeare of Stratford had been recognised as the great poet and dramatist, the "sweet swan of Avon,"

"Soul of the age,

The applause, delight, the wonder of our stage."

Well, twelve years after the publication of the Folio containing these eulogistic lines, viz., in 1635, Cuthbert Burbage, and Winifred, the widow of Richard Burbage, and "William his sonne," presented a petition to the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, the survivor of the "Incomparable Pair" to whom the Folio had been dedicated, and then Lord Chamberlain, praying that their rights in the theatres built

or owned by Burbage the elder, father of Richard and Cuthbert—those theatres where Shakespeare's dramas had been presented—should be recognised and respected. The petitioners are naturally anxious to say all they possibly can for themselves, and the company of players with whom they were associated. One of those players and one of "the partners in the profits of . . . the House" was William Shakspere. And how do they speak of him? Do they remind the Earl that one of their company had been that man of transcendent genius, Shakespeare, the great dramatist, the renowned poet, upon whom Ben Jonson had pronounced such a splendid panegyric, and whose collected works had been dedicated to himself and his brother? Surely they ought to have done this! Surely they would have done so if such had been the fact! Yet what do they say? "To ourselves we joined those deserving men, Shakspere, Hemings, Condall, Phillips and others, partners in the profits of that they call the House"; and as to the Blackfriars Theatre, there, they say, they "placed men players, which were Hemings, Condall, Shakspere." Now to me it does seem incredible that the Burbages should thus have written about Shakspere, calling him a "man-player," and speaking of him in the same terms as of the other



players, viz., as a "deserving man," if, indeed, both they and the Lord Chamberlain knew that he was the immortal poet who was "not of an age but for all time," and whose works had been dedicated to the two Earls, to their everlasting honour! Why this extraordinary reticence,—if Shakspere and Shakespeare are identical? This is the question to which, so far, no reply has been given.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John Manningham's allusions also constitute a "negative pregnant." And the same may, surely, be said of the recently discovered entry in the Belvoir Castle records concerning the work done by Shakspere and his fellow player Burbage in 1631 "about my Lord's impreso" (See *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, p. 243). Sir Edward Sullivan's attempted reply to the above is even more than ordinarily puerile. Bacon, he says, when he sent his "Humble Petition" to King James in 1624, only mentioned "his services past and necessity present," but "beyond these words there is not a syllable of *self-commendation*." But with the Burbages there was no question of "self-commendation." What the reader's attention is called to is that, on the received hypothesis, they make mention in support of their petition of a great dramatist, dead some twenty years before, and recognised some twelve years before, by another great poet, as "Soul of the age, the applause, delight, the wonder of our Stage," and yet are content to style him only that "deserving man!" Then, again, says Sir Edward, Jonson when he wrote to Cecil from gaol, and mentions his fellow-prisoner, Chapman, does not expatiate upon his works. "He mentions him merely as 'a gentleman whose name may perhaps have come to your Lordship, one Mr. George Chapman, a learned and honest man.'" And yet, comments Sir Edward triumphantly, "there are persons who still believe that Chapman wrote Chapman's works!" But what possible parallel can be drawn between the two cases? Jonson is writing to ask to be delivered from gaol, and he begins by apologising for the

This passage, then, so far from supplying contemporary evidence in support of the identity of the player with the poet, appears to me, as to many others, to raise no small presumption against it. But what of the positive evidence to support that identity? As to that I have written "what we require is evidence to establish the identity of the player with the poet and dramatist," and in a note I add: "Observe to 'establish the identity,'—not the fact that some

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fact that he got there in consequence of such a mean thing as "a play, my Lord"! And in Cecil's eyes, no doubt, a play would appear but a mean thing. There was no occasion, therefore, for Jonson to expatiate on his fellow-prisoner's works. It was quite sufficient that Cecil should know him as "a learned and honest man." But the Burbages are petitioning that their rights in the theatres built and owned by Burbage the elder, should be recognised and respected, and they seek to enforce their claim by a reference to the past history of the theatre, and to those who were associated with it, not only as players, but as partners in the profits of the House. Would it not have been worth while to remind the survivor of the "Incomparable Pair," the great patrons of the drama, to whom the Folio was dedicated, that one of these persons was the great poet, eulogised by Jonson as the glory of the British stage? But it is ever so. Shakspeare's fellow players always speak of him as a player, not as a poet and dramatist; just as Thomas Greene, who resided at New Place, always speaks of the owner of that estate as "Mr. Shakspeare," or "my cousin Shakspear," and never alludes to the (supposed) fact that he was the greatest poet and most successful dramatist of the day. There is, of course, an apparent exception in the case of the Folio preface, but that is just one of the points at issue, and one which I have fully discussed.

contemporaries believed in it." Whereupon Sir Edward Sullivan comments, with no little scorn : " Personally I have been up to now under the impression that when, say, half-a-dozen unprejudiced witnesses said they saw the man in the dock committing an assault, they did establish his identity." Indeed ! I think it is as well that Sir Edward does not sit upon the Bench to try prisoners, for he appears to think there can be no such thing as " mistaken identity." Suppose, for instance, there should be half a dozen " unprejudiced witnesses " on the other side, to deny the identity of the man in the dock with the man who committed the assault ! I would respectfully recommend Sir Edward to study such histories of mistaken identity as that of " The Lyons Mail," for example, or the more recent instance of Adolf Beck of Old Bailey fame. Moreover, the analogy, like most others put forward by Sir Edward Sullivan, does not hold. If I could produce the evidence of half-a-dozen writers contemporary with Sir Philip Francis, showing that they believed him to be the author of the letters of Junius, that would hardly establish the identity of Junius with Sir Philip Francis ! What the Stratfordians have to show is not only that their witnesses really believed in the identity of player and poet, and that they were " unpreju-

diced," but also that they had full opportunities of knowing the truth of the matter, and were not themselves deceived.

For if plays and poems were published under the name of "Shakespeare," by which name the man who wrote himself "Shakspere" was, it seems, not infrequently known to his contemporaries, no doubt they would be generally accepted as written by the player. That many plays in which Shakespeare had no part were, nevertheless, ascribed to him, because published in that name, is a simple matter of fact. But contemporary belief that he was the author of such plays would, of course, be no proof that he wrote them. It would only show that the witnesses, however "unprejudiced," had been deceived. Nay, the fact that *Titus Andronicus* was included in the Folio as Shakespeare's, and was ascribed to him by such an "unprejudiced witness" as Meres, in 1598, is so far from being considered a conclusive proof of the true authorship that the overwhelming balance of "orthodox" opinion is to the effect that Shakespeare had no hand in it at all. But Sir Edward Sullivan would appear to think that the fact that Francis Meres speaks of certain poems and plays as "Shakespeare's," is indisputable proof that player Shakspere must have been the author thereof!

**Chettle's supposed Allusion**

Sir Edward Sullivan, of course, relies upon Chettle's supposed allusion to Shakspere (1592) as showing that the Stratford player was writing plays, or mending old ones, before 1593. I venture to think that I have shown conclusively, in agreement with Mr. Fleay, Mr. Howard Staunton, and Mr. Castle, K.C., that Chettle makes no allusion to Shakespeare at all. (See *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, p. 317 *et seq.* *In re Shakespeare*, p. 94.) Now what says Sir Edward Sullivan as to this?

"Of course," he writes, "it is all important to Mr. Greenwood's case to show that there is no identification of actor and writer here; but the adjective 'dishonest' which he thinks fit to apply to the almost unanimous body of eminent Shakespearians who state that Chettle's language describes Shakespeare, is so far from what is expected in literary controversy that it can hardly carry immediate conviction to even those amongst his audience who know least upon the subject!"

Upon this I would remark first, that I do not seek to "carry conviction" by adjectives, but by arguments; and secondly, that Sir Edward Sullivan lecturing me on discourtesy seems just a little incongruous. One might exclaim with Lauronia,

*" Felicia tempora quae te  
Moribus opponunt ! "*

And our old friends the Gracchi suggest themselves once more. But, in truth, the above passage is absolutely unjustifiable and inexcusable. For Sir Edward Sullivan here merely follows Canon Beeching, who writes, " Mr. Greenwood has charged the biographers of Shakespeare with dishonesty for their interpretation of the familiar passage of *Kindhart's Dream* in which Chettle apologises for the rudeness of Greene in his *Groatsworth of Wit* " ; and he admits that he has read my reply to that accusation, which is as follows :—

" I have not charged the biographers with dishonesty for their *interpretation* of the passage in question. What I complain of, and complain of in very strong terms, is, that these biographers and critics . . . actually so write as to convey to the mind of the ordinary reader that Chettle makes mention of Shakespeare by name in the Preface to his work, and that, consequently, that supposed allusion is not a matter of inference and argument, but a fact patent on the document itself ! The usual way of doing this is by quietly slipping in Shakespeare's name in a bracket, without any admonition to the reader that his name is not mentioned at all. *This* I call a

'dishonest method of writing a biography,' and so it is. If these biographers fairly stated the terms of the document, and gave their reasons for supposing that Shakespeare is alluded to therein, there would be no reason to complain of this 'interpretation,' however widely one might disagree with it. The mischief is that they state what is merely their own 'interpretation' as though it were an historical fact, and the ordinary reader, who does not examine documents for himself, naturally believes it to be so. I repeat, this is a dishonest method of writing biography, but I have, of course, made no charge of personal dishonesty. I am quite aware what prejudice and self-deception will do, especially where 'Shakespeare' is concerned!''<sup>1</sup>

With those words before him Sir Edward Sullivan thinks it right, fair, and "honest" (save the mark!) to write the paragraph which I have quoted above. Well! Well! Well!

As to this supposed allusion to Shakspeare, which such eminent Shakespeareans as Mr. Fleay and Mr. Howard Staunton (as well as a lawyer like Mr. E. J. Castle, K.C.) summarily dismissed as no allusion at all, I have dealt with it very fully in chapter xi. of my book, and in chapter iii. of my Rejoinder to Canon Beeching, and, so far,

<sup>1</sup> *In re Shakespeare*, p. 94.

I have seen no answer to the reasoning I have there set forth.

### The Meaning of "Quality"

I will only add a word, therefore, with regard to Sir Edward Sullivan's note concerning the expression "quality." Chettle, alluding to somebody unnamed but who, as I contend, must be one of the playwrights addressed by Greene,<sup>1</sup> writes: "I am as sorry as if the originall fault had bene my fault, because myself have seene his [and here it is that the biographers quietly slip in "Shakespeare's" in brackets] demeanour no lesse civill than he excelent in the qualitie he professes." The Stratfordian critics contend that "quality" must necessarily refer to the profession of an actor, and that that actor must be Shakspeare. I have ventured to dispute both of these propositions. Whereupon Sir Edward Sullivan writes, "Mr. Greenwood endeavours to show that the word 'quality' which was at the time commonly used to designate the profession of an actor, was also used of other professions as well. He cites cases where it is used of an outlaw's occupation, and of a printer's,

<sup>1</sup> These, I believe, are Marlowe, Nash, and Peele. Marlowe addresses one of them as "The Young Juvenal." This, I think, must be Nash, whom Meres (1598) styles "gallant young Juvenal." (See *In re Shakespeare*, p. 96).



but none to show that it was ever employed in reference to a playwright."

Well, I have cited Butler's *Hudibras* to show that in his time it was used of a "poetaster" ("He served his Master, in *quality* of poetaster"), and if Sir Edward wishes for an earlier instance of the use of the word, as applied to a *writer*, I can refer him to a passage very much in point in Florio's *Montaigne*, viz.: "I have in my time seen some who by *writing* did earnestly get both their titles and living . . . affect the ignorance of so vulgar a *qualitie*."<sup>1</sup>

But even if it were necessary to hold that an actor is referred to, it certainly does not follow that that actor was Shakspeare; for, as I have shown, George Peele was one of the playwrights addressed by Greene, and Peele was a successful player, as well as playwright, and might quite truly have been alluded to both as having "facetious grace in writing," and being "excellent in the quality" he professed.

<sup>1</sup> Florio's *Montaigne*, Book I., chap. x. Florio's translation was published in 1603. In *Everyman out of His Humour* (IV., 2) Shift says, "I have now reconciled myself to other courses, and profess a living out of my other qualities." To which Sogliardo replies, "Nay, he has left all now, and is able to live like a gentleman by his qualities." To be a playwright, I may add, was a recognised "profession." Thus, in Vaughan's *Golden Grove* (1600), we read "not inferiour to these was one Christopher Marlow, by profession a playmaker."

So much for this celebrated passage, the interpretation of which is, certainly, important, but, as certainly, not "all important," to my case. For myself, I think I have made it quite clear that there is here no allusion to Shakespeare (or Shakspeare) at all.

### The "Parnassus" Plays

I will now deal with Sir Edward Sullivan's comments upon what I wrote concerning that curious old play *The Return from Parnassus*. It may well be that the words I quoted from *The Winter's Tale* were not published till after the performance of this old play;<sup>1</sup> but these words, which I cited merely as illustrative of Shakespeare's classical allusions, are not material to the argument. The whole point is that the University writer of the old drama holds up the players to ridicule as ignorant half-educated vulgarians, "rude grooms" as Greene called them, who know so little about classical authors that they think there was a writer called *Metamor-*

<sup>1</sup> *The Return from Parnassus*, Part II., being the third play of the trilogy, was written for the Yuletide celebrations of 1601, or for the New Year rejoicings of 1602, at St. John's College, Cambridge. The words quoted by me from *The Winter's Tale*, were

"O, Proserpina,  
For the flowers now which frightened thou let'st fall  
From Dis's waggon."

*phosis*, as well as a writer called *Ovid*! "Few of the University pen plaies well," says Will Kempe, the clown and Morris dancer; "they smell too much of that writer Ovid and that writer Metamorphosis, and talk too much of Proserpina and Juppiter. Why, here's our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down, aye and *Ben Jonson* too." Whereupon, says Sir Edward Sullivan, "rational students of Shakespeare have seen in these words an allusion to his confessed supremacy at the time." Indeed! What says Gifford? "I will just venture to inform those egregious critics that the heroes of it (the old play) are laughing both at Will Kempe and Shakespeare. Of Shakespeare's plays they neither know nor say anything. . . . Yet Shakespeare had then written several of his best pieces, and Jonson not one of his. . . . We shall now, I suppose, hear little more of Will Kempe, who was probably brought on the stage in a fool's cap, to make mirth for the University wits, and who is dismissed, together with his associate, in a most contemptuous manner, as '*a mere leaden spout*'!"<sup>2</sup>

But Gifford, perhaps, was not "rational"! What then of Mr. Mullinger, and Mr. Macray?

<sup>2</sup> Gifford's *Jonson*, by Colonel Cunningham, pp. lxii., n. and cxcviii. n.

“ The notices in the third play,” says the latter scholar, in the Preface to his excellent edition of the *Trilogy*, “ seem (as Mr. Mullinger has remarked, *University of Cambridge*, p. 524 n) ‘ to convey the notion that Shakespeare is the favourite of the rude, half-educated strolling players, as distinguished from the refined geniuses of the University.’ ” And is it not clear, on the face of it, that the criticism which these ignorant clowns pass upon the works of University playwrights applies with peculiar force to Shakespeare himself? For who so saturated with “ that writer Ovid,” and “ that writer Metamorphosis ” as Shakespeare?

But I will not waste time over this well-known passage, for it is abundantly clear, except to the wilfully blind, that the fact is exactly as I have described it, viz.: that “ the players are held up to ridicule before a cultivated audience of Cambridge scholars and students,” and that the reference to “ our fellow Shakespeare ” is as obvious a piece of sarcasm as can be found in all literature.

But Sir Edward objects to the “ audience of Cambridge scholars.” “ He seems to assume,” he writes of my humble self, “ (although he does not say so), that the play was specially written for Cambridge University, and was never intended to be performed elsewhere.” I certainly do

make that assumption, which I think is an almost self-evident one. At any rate I am not aware that there is any evidence to show that these plays were "intended to be," or actually were, "performed elsewhere." They were acted at St. John's College, and are all of them "Christmas toys," as Mr. Macray truly says. They are full of illustrations of University life, and the struggles and studies of poor scholars. The third play owed much of its popularity among the students to the personal satire expressed in the character of the *Recorder*. "In him is personified Francis Bracky, who in his office as Recorder of Cambridge incurred extreme unpopularity in the University by maintaining the right of the Mayor to precedence over the Vice-Chancellor in certain cases."<sup>1</sup> These topical allusions could have had very little interest for any but a University audience,—“the academic auditors,” as Mr. Oliphant Smeaton says, in his edition of the plays, “to whose sympathies it appealed.”

### Imaginary "Stratford" References

I have already commented on the fact that Sir Edward Sullivan imagined that the name of Sly

See Mr. James Bass Mullinger's *University of Cambridge*, 1535-1625, p. 526, and Mr. Macray's Edition of the Plays. Preface, p. v.

in the Induction to *The Taming of the Shrew* was a proof that the play was written by William Shakspeare, of Stratford, in ignorance (or shall we charitably say, forgetfulness ?) of the fact that the same name occurs in the Induction to the older play which very few besides Professor Courthope ascribe to Shakespeare.<sup>1</sup> I have also pointed out how he tried to make capital out of the occurrence of the name "Wincot" in *Henry the Fourth*, Part II., (as unwarrantably amended by Malone), in ignorance of the fact that the Folios all read not "Wincot" but "Woncot." I will now give one more example of Sir Edward's critical (or uncritical) methods for the edification of the reader.

Sir Edward seems to imagine it is a proof of the Stratfordian authorship that "in *III. Henry VI.*; iv., ii., the action is laid in 'a plain in Warwickshire,' and shortly after at Coventry; and the towns mentioned in these scenes in connection

<sup>1</sup> Professor Courthope's theory, if I could only accept it as true, would be, indeed, of great assistance to the negative theory which I have endeavoured to set forth, for he maintains that not only *Titus*, and *Henry VI.*, Part I., but also *The Contention*, and *The True Tragedy*, the old *Taming of a Shrew*, and *The Troublesome Raigne of King John*, were written by Shakespeare. We should thus have Shakespeare writing plays as early as 1588, or 1589. This, of course, would be no difficulty to those who look upon "the Stratford rustic," who left home probably in 1587, as endowed with superhuman intelligence, and writing by divine inspiration. But it would make a tremendous demand upon the faith of more sober reasoners. (See *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, pp. 168-173).

with the movements of the army display a most accurate topographical knowledge." But the scene in question is taken bodily, with the exception of a few lines at the end, from "*The Second Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster*," and as I have given my reasons for thinking that this old play was not the work of Shakespeare, and that he had little, if anything, to do with the version of it which subsequently appeared as the third part of *King Henry VI.*, I will not delay further over this imaginary evidence.<sup>1</sup>

The fact is that all these fancied "Stratford" names have about as much relevancy to the question of authorship as has the fact that Speed, in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, pronounces "sheep" in the same manner as "ship." This, forsooth, is said to be "Warwickshire" pronunciation. Just as if the Hampshire rustics did not, and do not to this day, pronounce "sheep" in exactly the same manner!

<sup>1</sup> It is rather amusing to find that in Miss Lee's conjectural table of Shakespeare's and Marlow's shares in *II. and III. Henry VI.* the scene referred to by Sir Edward Sullivan, as evidence of Shakspeare's authorship, is assigned to Marlowe! In any case the idea that because Warwick and Oxford meet Clarence and Somerset on "a plain in Warwickshire," Shakspeare of Stratford must have written this play appears not a little comic. What curious ideas of "evidence" these "egregious critics" have, to be sure!

**Shakespeare and Sport**

Then Sir Edward asks why Mr. Justice Madden's work, *The Diary of Master William Silence*, is "passed over, all but unmentioned" by me, and characteristically suggests that I have not seen the book, and quote it only "at second hand."

The truth is that I am quite familiar with the work in question, but, in my judgment, it is not a "valuable," but a useless work.<sup>1</sup> Of all the extraordinary delusions which affect the defenders of the Stratfordian authorship, not the least extraordinary is the idea that Shakespeare's familiarity with the terms of sport is somehow proof positive of the supposed fact that William Shakspeare wrote the *Plays and Poems*. To me the presumption appears to be just the other way. For whence is it that the young man of Stratford is supposed to have derived his wonderful knowledge of sport? Hunting—more especially the chase of the deer, which at that time was hunting *par excellence*—and hawking were the recreations of the great and nobly born. Thus we find it said by Bacon, speaking of "Forests, Parks, and Chases," "It is a sport proper to the nobility and men of better rank; and it is to keep a difference between the gentry and the common sort." Of Bacon himself Osborn says, (*Advice to a Son*, 1658, Second Part, p. 70), "I have heard him entertaine

<sup>1</sup> I mean, of course, from an evidentiary point of view.



a Country Lord in the proper terms relating to Hawkes and Dogges." I beg the *gentle* reader to note that I do not cite this passage in support of the "Baconian" theory, but to illustrate the fact that hunting being, as Sir Thomas More said, "the exercise of most noble men," it was much more natural for a noble lord than for a provincial rustic to be familiar with the technical terms thereof. We have no indication whatever that Shakspeare, of Stratford, had the opportunity of making himself a past-master in these sports of the rich and noble. To account for the wonderful knowledge displayed in the *Plays and Poems*, he has been made lawyer, schoolmaster, gardener, printer, soldier, and a great many other things besides; but I am not aware that he has ever yet been turned into a gamekeeper. True it is that some of his admirers will have it that he was a poacher, and stole some of Lucy's "harts and does" (as Mr. Lee grotesquely puts it); but that story does not seem to bear the test of criticism, and even if it were true it really can hardly be held sufficient to account for all Shakespeare's precise knowledge of the ways and terms of falconry and the chase.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Many of Mr. Justice Madden's illustrations are taken from *Henry VI.* (Act III., s.i., of Part III. for example, where we have the "two keepers with cross-bows in their hands," and which is taken from the old play). These, for the reasons I have already given, I believe to be worthless. See *The Shakespeare*

**The Two Stratfordian Schools**

Here is another specimen of Sir Edward's logic. *A propos* of my remarks concerning the two different schools of opinion which co-exist in the Stratfordian camp, with regard to "the learning of Shakespeare" (one holding fast to Farmer's celebrated essay, and appealing confidently to Jonson's "small Latin and less Greek"; the other represented by the late Professor Collins, and appealing with equal confidence to "the works themselves"), Sir Edward delivers himself as follows: "What Mr. Greenwood . . . seems to forget is, that, for all their differences on minor matters, Shakespearians [*i.e.*, those whom for the sake of brevity and convenience I have ventured to call "Stratfordians"] are absolutely at one on the question of the authorship of Shakespeare's writings; and the greater their differences on such minor points, the more logically valuable becomes their unanimity upon the main question."

Now I most certainly had not forgotten the fact asserted in the first of the above sentences, that is, if Sir Edward merely wishes to affirm that every man who believes that Shakspere of Stratford was

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*Problem Restated*, chap. v., on "Titus and the Trilogy" As to the poaching story, I am reluctant to give it up, but have been constrained to do so by cogent considerations. (*Ibid*, p. 24 *et seq.*)

the author of the works of Shakespeare, agrees with every other man who holds the same belief. *That* is a proposition which hardly requires a *memoria technica* to fix it upon the tablets of the memory. At the same time I remember that these "Shakespearians" are very far from being "at one" on the question of how much of the work contained in the First Folio is really Shakespeare's. But this also, is, no doubt, one of the minor points. But what of the second proposition *viz.* that "the greater their differences on such minor points, the more logically valuable becomes their unanimity on the main question"? This is logic which, I confess, I am not able to appreciate. One school says, "Shakspeare wrote the *Plays and Poems*; Shakspeare was a man without culture, and with very little education; he had, in fact, just a smattering of Latin, and no Greek; therefore, you would expect to find that the *Plays and Poems* contain no learning; and that, in fact, is just what you *do* find." The other school says, "Shakspeare wrote the *Plays and Poems*; the *Plays and Poems* furnish indubitable evidence that the man who wrote them was a learned man; he was certainly familiar with the Latin classics: 'so far from having no pretension to classical scholarship he could almost certainly read Latin with as much facility as a cultivated Englishman

of our time reads French . . . with some at least of the principal Latin classics he was intimately acquainted,' and through the Latin, if not through the originals, he had 'a remarkably extensive knowledge of the Greek classics also'; therefore Shakspeare must have had all this learning and culture."<sup>1</sup>

It will be seen that this is not the case of men who by different chains of reasoning are ultimately brought to the same conclusion; but of men who, starting from the same conclusion (which is taken as a postulate in either case) contrive to make entirely different inferences and assumptions square with that conclusion. And the more they differ in such inferences and assumptions, says Sir Edward Sullivan, the more logically certain does it become that the conclusion from which they start (and which is the only thing wherein their "unanimity" is displayed) must be the correct one! This is latter day logic, which I own I think "'twere folly to remember, 'twere wiser to forget"!

#### **Lord Campbell on Shakespeare's Law**

And now, leaving other points to be dealt with when we come to consider Canon Beeching's criticism, I will call the reader's attention once

<sup>1</sup> The quotations are from Mr. Churton Collins's Essay.

more to some remarks made by Sir Edward Sullivan in his "School of Assumption" article, published in *The Library*, to which I have already referred.

Commenting on Mark Twain's quotation of Lord Campbell as to the accuracy of Shakespeare's law, Sir Edward writes as follows: "Presumably the persons who rely on this passage have read the book from which it comes, but it is a striking fact that not one of them, so far as we [note the royal "we"! ] are aware ever mentions Lord Campbell's views as to *how* Shakespeare's legal knowledge was acquired. Here is what he says:

" 'I should not hesitate to state, with some earnestness, that there has been a great deal of misrepresentation and delusion as to Shakespeare's opportunities, when a youth, of acquiring knowledge, and as to the knowledge he had acquired. *From a love of the incredible and a wish to make what he afterwards accomplished absolutely miraculous,*<sup>1</sup> a band of critics have conspired to lower the condition of his father, and to represent the son, when approaching man's estate, as still almost wholly illiterate.' "

"He goes on [continues Sir Edward] to show up the unsoundness of statements reflecting on John Shakespeare's ability to write; and then

<sup>1</sup> My italics.

discusses the various opportunities which the poet had of learning law. He says: 'Shakespeare, during his first years in London, when his purse was low, may have dined at the ordinary in Alsatia . . . described by Dekker. (He quotes the well-known passage from the *Gull's Hornbook*, 1609.) In such company a willing listener might soon make great progress in law.' " Sir Edward then proceeds further to quote Lord Campbell to this effect, " We cannot argue with confidence on the principles which guide us to safe conclusions respecting ordinary men, when we are reasoning respecting one of whom it was truly said :—

'Each change of many-coloured life he drew,  
Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new;  
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,  
And panting Time toiled after him in vain.' "

And this is Sir Tittlebat Toplofty's profound reflection upon the whole matter: " Only fancy any fair-minded writer *restating* the Shakespeare problem and never mentioning these views of Lord Campbell, and much more of the same kind which is to be found in his impartial work. Yet these are the ways of Shakespeare's enemies."

The reference to "*restating* the Shakespeare problem" is, of course, an allusion to my book, and the inference is that I cannot be fair-minded.

But, nevertheless, the truth is that the above criticism is either sheer impudence, or sheer ineptitude. The first quotation from Lord Campbell as to Shakespeare's (*i.e.* Shakspeare's) opportunities when a youth of acquiring knowledge is simply irrelevant to the question of his acquisition of the knowledge of law. Lord Campbell is here speaking, not of that question, but of the opportunities which he thinks the "Stratford rustic"<sup>1</sup> might have had of acquiring knowledge in general. He is combating the theories, not of "Shakespeare's enemies" (as Sir Tittlebat so absurdly styles the doubters of the Stratfordian authorship), but of those "Shakespearialaters" who wish to make the achievements of their demigod "absolutely miraculous." And what of Lord Campbell's alleged showing up "of the unsoundness of statements reflecting on John Shakespeare's ability to write?" Well, for once, Sir Edward Sullivan's "presumption" is well founded. We *have* read the book from which he quotes. And what says Lord Campbell (p. 15) as to John Shakspeare's writing? He refers to that very well-known document of 1565, with the signatures, or

<sup>1</sup> It was the late Dr. Garnett who so styled the young man from Stratford. See *History of English Literature*, by Garnett and Gosse, Vol. II., p. 200.

" marks," of the nineteen aldermen and burgesses of Stratford attached thereto, and quotes Knight, to the effect that the " mark " usually ascribed to John Shakspeare really belongs to the name of Thomas Dyrun in the line below. But this convenient theory has long been exploded. It was put forward by Charles Knight in 1843, but, in a later edition of his work, he reluctantly owned that it was untenable, and confessed that Malone was quite right in this matter ; and since then, " so far as we are aware," it has never since been put forward by any Shakespearean scholar. The modern contention of some, but by no means all, of the " orthodox " school, is that, although John Shakspeare chose to appear as a " marksman " he could, nevertheless, " write with facility." However, Knight's long ago discarded theory is quite good enough for Sir Edward Sullivan!<sup>1</sup>

So far Lord Campbell has not helped Sir Edward very much. But now, having considered the

<sup>1</sup> See *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, pp. 5-9. As I there point out, " It is to be noticed that in the second column (of the signatures) the name ' John ' occurs five times, one being the baptismal name of John Shakspeare. All these Johns are ' marksmen,' and, judging from the facsimile, I should say that in all the five cases the name ' John ' was written by the same hand," probably a notary, scrivener, or lawyer's clerk. Lord Campbell wrote in 1858, and much critical water has flowed under the bridge of the Avon since then. Sir Tittlebat, like " panting Time," toils after it in vain ! In plain English, he is not up-to-date.



irrelevant matter quoted by him from his lordship's book, I have to meet his lofty strictures for that although I cited the old Lord Chancellor as to the accuracy of Shakespeare's law, I omitted (purposely, and most unfairly, of course), to mention his "views as to how Shakespeare's legal knowledge was acquired." Sir Edward cites two passages whereby he gives the reader to understand that, according to Lord Campbell, Shakespeare, the Stratford player might have acquired this wonderful legal knowledge (for wonderful indeed it was if Lord Campbell's judgment is to be accepted) in two ways, viz : (1) by dining "at the ordinary in Alsatia, described by Dekker," and (2) by the intuition of a miraculous intelligence. And Sir Edward suggests that these passages, so cited by him, are really of such value and importance that I, being anything but a "fair-minded writer," took good care to suppress them !

Well, my advice to the reader is to read Lord Campbell's book through. He will then be able to judge of the extreme silliness of this suggestion. Lord Campbell's book is in the form of a letter to Mr. Payne Collier, who had asked his "opinion upon the question keenly agitated in late years, whether Shakespeare was a clerk in an attorney's office at Stratford before he joined the players in

London ? ” Lord Campbell strongly inclines to answer this question in the affirmative. He quotes the well-known passage from Nash’s preface to Greene’s *Menaphon* about those who “ leave the trade of *Noverint*, whereto they were born,” and has no doubt that it applies to Shakespeare ; and he further quotes the even better known passage from Greene’s *Groatsworth of Wit* as “ evidence amply sufficient to prove that there was a conspiracy between the two libellers, Nash and Robert Greene, and that Shakespeare was the object of it.” And he concludes as follows : “ Therefore, my dear Mr. Payne Collier, in support of your opinion that Shakespeare had been bred to the profession of the law in an attorney’s office, I think you will be justified in saying that the fact was attested publicly in Shakespeare’s lifetime by two contemporaries of Shakespeare who were engaged in the same pursuits with himself, who must have known him well, and who were probably acquainted with the whole of his career. I must likewise admit that this assertion is strongly corroborated by internal evidence to be found in Shakespeare’s writings. . . . I have made extracts which I think are well worth your attention. These extracts I will now lay before you, with a few explanatory remarks, which perhaps you will think demonstrably prove

that your correspondent is a *lawyer*, AND NOTHING BUT A LAWYER.”<sup>1</sup>

Precious little here in support of the theory that Shakespeare acquired his law either from low Alsatian “ordinaries,” or from divine inspiration! However, later on he writes, “Still I must warn you, that I myself remain rather sceptical. All that I can admit to you is that you may be right, and that while there is weighty evidence for you, there is nothing conclusive against you. . . I am quite serious and sincere in what I have written about Nash and Robert Greene having asserted the fact, but I by no means think that on this ground alone it must necessarily be taken for truth. . . what you have mainly to rely upon (and this consideration may prevail in your favour with a large majority of the literary world) is *the seemingly utter impossibility of Shakespeare having acquired, on any other theory, the wonderful knowledge of law which he undoubtedly displays.*”<sup>2</sup> Then, having said all this, as though apprehensive that his judicial summing-up might appear unduly favourable to one of the parties to the suit, he ends by quoting the passage from Dekker (“If they chance to discourse it is of nothing but *statutes, bonds,*

<sup>1</sup> So in original.

<sup>2</sup> My italics.

*recognisances, fines, recoveries,"* etc., etc.), and adds, "In such a company a willing listener might soon make great progress in law." But did Lord Campbell himself really think that this was the explanation of Shakespeare's legal knowledge as revealed in his works? Hardly. It would have been remarkable indeed if so learned a lawyer had arrived at such an inept conclusion, although he adds, in his anxiety to preserve the appearance of judicial impartiality: "It may be urged that I have unconsciously exaggerated the difficulty to be encountered by Shakespeare *in picking up his knowledge of that which I myself have been so long labouring to understand.*" So, as a last alternative, although himself very strongly inclined to the "attorney's clerk" hypothesis, he thinks it incumbent upon him to set before the jury the "divine inspiration" theory. "Many may think that Shakespeare resembles his own Prince Hal . . . who, notwithstanding his revels in East Cheap, and with no apparent opportunities of acquiring the knowledge he displayed, astonished the world with his universal wisdom."

I have dwelt upon this exquisite specimen of Sullivanese criticism I fear at much greater length than it deserved, but I desired to show the reader by a full analysis of such a preposterous

example that the pronouncements of this "Pomponius Ego" of journalism are as lacking in reason as they are replete with bitterness and irritation. The truth is that although Lord Campbell's opinion as to the accuracy of Shakespeare's law must always command respect, in view of the high position held by him among the lawyers of his day, his lordship's opinion as to the *manner* in which player Shakspeare might, possibly, have acquired all this legal learning carries no more weight than that of any other writer of the "orthodox" faith.

Beyond that opinion, so definitely expressed (to wit, that Shakspeare had been an attorney's clerk), we are only interested in his judgment as to "the seemingly utter impossibility of Shakespeare having acquired, on any other theory, the wonderful knowledge of law which he undoubtedly displays." And in this judgment he tells us that "a large majority of the literary world" must concur. "Great as is the knowledge of law," writes his lordship, "which Shakespeare's writings display, and familiar as he appears to have been with all its forms and proceedings, the whole of this would easily be accounted for *if* [my italics] for some years, he had occupied a desk in the office of a country attorney in good business, attending sessions and

assizes, keeping leets and law days, and, perhaps, being sent up to the metropolis in term time to conduct suits before the Lord Chancellor or the Superior Courts of Common Law at Westminster, according to the ancient practice of country attorneys, who would not employ a London agent to divide their fees." *This* was the theory as to player Shakspeare's knowledge of law towards which Lord Campbell strongly leaned ; but then, as he tells us, if such had been the case, " it might have been reasonably expected that there would have been deeds or wills witnessed by him still extant,—and, after a very diligent search, none such can be discovered." Moreover, except the supposed references by Nash and Greene, " there is no hint by his foes or his friends of Shakespeare having consumed pens, paper, ink, and pounce in an attorney's office at Stratford."

We of the "unorthodox" school of course reject unhesitatingly the "attorney's clerk" theory. It was obviously called in to account for that which, as Lord Campbell tells us, seems otherwise unaccountable, to wit "Shakespeare's" knowledge of law. There is not really a *scintilla* of evidence to support it. We who believe that the author of Hamlet was neither a "Stratford rustic" nor a London player, are, naturally, not troubled by these difficulties. But, I would ask

the impartial reader, is it not childish, and worse, that Sir Edward Sullivan should accuse me of suppressing these passages from Lord Campbell's book for unfair and indirect motives? On the contrary, I pray in aid the whole of that remarkable letter to Mr. Payne Collier, in support of the argument I have endeavoured to set forth in *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*.<sup>1</sup>

#### Mrs. Stopes on Shakspere's Aunts and Shakspere's Law

In this connection, and while upon the subject of Shakespeare's legal knowledge, I must make reference to an article which appeared in *The Athenæum* of August 14th last (1909), from the pen of the learned and industrious Mrs. Stopes, headed "Shakespeare's Aunts, and the Snitterfield Property," wherein are set forth a large number of exceedingly dry details of a Chancery suit concerning this same property. And what is the conclusion of the whole matter? "Though this Chancery case does not yield us much new matter it makes real our somewhat hazy notions

<sup>1</sup> If I could suppose that Lord Campbell's opinion, not as a lawyer, but as a Shakespearean critic, was entitled to much weight, I would pray in aid also his statement, "I do not hesitate to believe that Nash, in 1589, directly alludes to *Hamlet* as a play of Shakespeare." For can any sane man believe that Shakspere, who left Stratford probably in 1587, had written *Hamlet* (in any form) by 1589? As to Nash's reference to "the trade of *noverint*," this is now generally supposed to refer not to Shakespeare but to Kyd.

of the property settled on Shakespeare's aunts." That is comforting, certainly. But what else? Well, "the whole series of documents, taken together, teach us a great many important points regarding the poet's family and surroundings. It lets us picture the house abutting on the High Street where John Shakespeare was *doubtless* born, the extent of the united properties, and the stretches of the common fields which the poet *doubtless* haunted in his youth to catch the conies, permitted to the freeholders. But, above all, it answers *conclusively* the questions so mockingly put by the Baconians, Where did the Stratford man learn his law? There are more legal documents concerning this Snitterfield property than were drawn up for any other family of the time in Warwickshire, as any one may test who wades through the 'Feet of Fines,' and, as few of his relatives could write, it is possible they could not read. William Shakespeare was very likely esteemed as the scholar of the family, and *doubtless* had all these deeds by heart, through reading them to his anxious and careful relatives when they were brought out of his 'box of evidences' to strengthen the case for the defendant against Thomas Mayowe."

I commend this to the reader as a specimen of

<sup>1</sup> The italics in the above quotation are mine.



sound, sober, sane, and "orthodox" reasoning. No mere hypothesis here; no jumping to conclusions; no disregard of the teachings of human experience! Yet I would take leave to make a few comments. In the first place the triple occurrence in this short passage of Mr. Lee's favourite adverb, "doubtless," seems to show that this easy method of settling biographical doubts has become contagious. Secondly, I would remark that others, besides "Baconians," are wont to ask, "Where did the Stratford man learn his law?" I never heard that Lord Campbell, for example, was a "Baconian." Thirdly, the suggestion that William Shakespeare (*i.e.* Shakspeare) was "esteemed as the scholar of the family," is really no more than a piece of very gratuitous assumption.<sup>1</sup> And, fourthly, Mrs. Stopes's "conclusive" answer to her question seems to me to indicate a remarkable facility of arriving at desired conclusions. From the Snitterfield suit Shakspeare might, certainly, get some small smatterings of the practice and jargon of one branch of real property law, just as any litigant in modern times can, if he tries to do so, gather a

<sup>1</sup> Judging by his handwriting, if the facsimile signature of "Gilbert Shakspeare" given by Halliwell in his monumental edition of the *Works of Shakespeare* (Vol. I., p. 25) is to be trusted, one would imagine that this Gilbert was a much better "scholar" than William.

few crumbs of legal learning so far as applicable to his own case. But to imagine that from these multifarious deeds, even though, "doubtless," got by heart, and even though coupled with his father's litigation, and "the Chancery case which he hugged to his heart during ten years at least," he could have obtained the knowledge of law which must have been possessed by the author of the *Works of Shakespeare*, reveals a power of proceeding *per saltum* which any Baconian might justly envy. I had always imagined that to become an accurate lawyer, or anything like one, required a long course of experience, hard work, and industrious training; but what an easy task it must have been in Shakspeare's day to obtain a mastery of legal principles and legal usage!

#### **Miss Marie Corelli on Shakspeare's Marriage Licence**

I must here mention another recent utterance concerning "the immortal bard" which I find in *The Times* of August 21st last, where Miss Marie Corelli writes of "the interesting association between Whitgift and Shakespeare." For "when Bishop of Worcester, Whitgift signed the marriage licence between William Shakespeare and Anna Hathaway." This is extremely interesting, especially coming, as it does, straight from "Stratford-on-Avon"; but it gives ground for

some reflection nevertheless. In the Registry of the Diocese of Worcester there is to be found a "Marriage Bond," executed on November 28th, 1582, by two bondsmen named Sandells and Richardson, described therein as "agricolæ," both of Stratford, who bound themselves in the sum of £40 "to save harmless the right reverend Father in God, Lord John, Bishop of Worcester, for licensing William Shagspere and Anne Hathwey . . . to be married together with once asking of the banns of Matrimony." Of these bondsmen, by the way, who thus undertook that there were no impediments to the marriage, such as pre-contracts, for example, Mr. Hunter writes (*New Illustrations of Shakespeare*, Vol. I., p. 50). "Two more unseemly persons to attend at a poet's bridal can hardly be conceived . . . two husbandmen who were unable to write their names and whose marks are so singularly rude that they betray a more than common degree of rusticity." However, it appears that these two worthies, by the execution of this bond, enabled "the scholar of his family" to be married in haste, with only once asking of the banns. But what of the licence signed by Whitgift? The registers have been searched for it in vain. But, curiously enough, in the Episcopal register of Worcester there is a minute to the effect that

on November 27th, 1582, the very day before the execution of the marriage bond, a licence was issued for the marriage of William Shaxpere and Anna Whateley, of Temple Grafton. I will hazard no conjecture here as to the meaning of this remarkable coincidence, but I come back to Miss Marie Corelli's alleged proof of "the interesting association between Whitgift and Shakespeare." Whitgift, says Miss Corelli, "when Bishop of Worcester, signed the marriage licence between William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway,"—the "Shagspere" and "Hathwey" of the bond, and, possibly, if not probably, the "Shaxpere" of the licence of November 27th, 1582. Well, let us grant, for argument's sake, that he did so. What sort of "association" does that show between the Bishop and Shakspere? Exactly the same kind of association as that which existed between the King of France and the gentleman who claimed the royal acquaintance on the ground that the King had "signed his contract of marriage!" He, too, like Shakspeare in later time, had acquired wealth, a country house, and a coat of arms.

J'acquis d'un argent bien gagné  
 Chateau, blason, titre, equipage;  
 Et, sire, vous avez signé  
 Mon contrat de mariage.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Béranger, *Le Contrat de Mariage*.

It is true that, as Miss Corelli also recalls, Whitgift, when Archbishop of Canterbury, was one of those who licensed the publication of *Venus and Adonis*, dedicated by William Shakespeare to the Earl of Southampton, and it is also, unfortunately, true that I have been called a "Baconian" merely for noticing the facts to which those of that faith call attention, viz., that Whitgift had been Bacon's tutor at Cambridge, and that Bacon and Southampton were intimate. The appellation is not warranted in my case, but, certainly, the fact that Whitgift, acting under Elizabeth's Injunctions of 1559, and the decree of the Star Chamber of 1586, was party to the licensing of the poem, is but little proof of any "association" between the Archbishop and the player.

### Canon Beeching

I now turn to the Church Militant, in the person of Canon Beeching, and in offering a brief reply to the Reverend Canon's observations and criticisms of my book,<sup>1</sup> in *The Nineteenth Century*, for August last, I desire at the outset to express my regret that he should be under the impression that I have charged him with "wil-

<sup>1</sup> *In re Shakespeare, Beeching v. Greenwood. Rejoinder on behalf of the defendant.* (John Lane).

fully misrepresenting" me. I absolutely disclaim the making of any such charge. To suppose that Canon Beeching has, with intention, and malice prepense, set himself to misrepresent what I wrote would, indeed, be preposterous. For myself, I believe, and am happy in the belief, that wilful misrepresentation is very rare, whether in literary or in political controversy. It is prejudice and intolerance, leading to the neglect to give full and impartial consideration to distasteful arguments, that generally lead to the misstatement of an opponent's case. Something of this I may have thought I found in the Canon's controversial methods, but to charge him with deliberate perversion of the truth would be to make an accusation at once intolerable and absurd, and one which would react heavily against the accuser. I do not think any words of mine can, even by perverse ingenuity, be construed as containing an implication so offensive. If any such there be I can only say that no thought of such an interpretation was in the mind of the writer of them.<sup>1</sup> Having made this necessary

<sup>1</sup> On the very first page of my book *In re Shakespeare*, I expressly say, with reference to Canon Beeching's criticism, that "I, of course, make no charge of conscious and deliberate misrepresentation." The Canon complains of the expression "the economy of truth," of which I once make use (p. 5), but this is a well-known and historic phrase which was long ago applied to certain theological controversialists and harmonists,

preface, let me say a word as to my own position in this controversy.

Canon Beeching, in the "epistle dedicatory," prefixed to his "Reply" to my *Shakespeare Problem Restated*, describes that work as "the latest statement by a lawyer . . . of a curious paradox which seems to have a special fascination for legal minds," to wit, "the opinion originated by a Miss Delia Bacon in America, and since, imported into this country, that 'Shakespeare's works were written by the great Lord Chancellor, her namesake.'" On page 1 of his book, however, we read, "Mr. Greenwood is careful to guard himself against being supposed to ask whether Francis Bacon wrote the Shakespearean plays and poems, for that is a literary question on which men of letters would be entitled to the last word." These two statements appear to me to amount almost to a contradiction in terms; nor can I honestly lay claim to that disqualifying humility which Canon Beeching is so anxious to ascribe to me. The reason why I have not asked the question which in his epistle dedicatory he has so curiously asserted that I

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and surely he needs not to be told that it does not imply wilful untruthfulness. As Mr. Lionel Tollemache wrote, in his *Stones of Stumbling* (p. 73), the meaning is "merely a judicious husbanding, *οικονομία*, of truth."

*do* ask, is quite other than that which he attributes to me with such a delightful air of patronage, and in words which suggest the formidable question, Who in this country is to be recognised as a "man of letters," and by what test is he to be known?<sup>1</sup> It is because, as I have more than once distinctly stated, so far am I from being a "Baconian" that I am entirely "agnostic" as to any share which Francis Bacon may, or may not, have had in the works of "Shakespeare." But on this point I need say no more, since Canon Beeching has now, as I knew he would when my words were brought to his attention, fully made the *amende honorable*, by accepting my statement on the matter, and expressing his regret at having misapprehended my position.

### **The Canon objects to "Authority"**

Let me now come to more controversial matters. The Canon takes great exception to my method of procedure, because on many points where I disagree with him I quote high Shakespearean authorities against him in preference to advancing

<sup>1</sup> This question is mightily provocative of reminiscences of the late Professor Churton Collins's trenchant essays on "Our Literary Guides," and "The Gentle Art of Self-Avertisement," and his pungent remarks on "mutual-admiration cliques, log-rolling, and what is vulgarly known as 'pulling the strings.'" See his *Ephemera Critica*.



arguments of my own. Well, this is the first time I have heard of an ecclesiastical controversialist complaining of the argument from authority! But, seriously, if I quote the Cambridge Editors, or Malone, or Dr. Ingleby, or Halliwell-Philipp, or Mr. Lee, or Mrs. Stopes, in opposition to Canon Beeching, it is because where I do so I adopt their arguments as my own, and because I conceived that the Canon would attribute more weight to the opinions expressed by these well-known and orthodox critics, than to any contention advanced by a "heretic," such as I am with regard to the Stratfordian faith. If, for instance, I quote the learned Mrs. Stopes, to the effect that Shallow was not, as so commonly imagined, intended to represent Sir Thomas Lucy, it is not, I assure Canon Beeching, because I "have a constitutional objection to looking at facts and arguments" for myself, and "making up" my "own mind" (I think I may fairly say that I *have* looked at facts and arguments for myself, and that I *have* made up my own mind), but because I am of opinion that Mrs. Stopes happens to be right in this particular matter, and because I here adopt her reasoning as my own, and recommend it to the Canon's very serious consideration. I really thought he would have commended rather than have reproved me for endeavouring to rest my

case against him upon authorities of such unimpeachable orthodoxy, and I had humbly conceived that he might have thought it worth while to answer these, where my own poor arguments would have been left unnoticed by him.

### Shakspeare's "Scripts"

But let us come to a more definite matter of complaint. Canon Beeching had said that Shakspeare's two signatures to the conveyances of 1613 are "in two different scripts," that is to say that Shakspeare made use of one "script" on March 10th, and another on March 11th, of that year. Upon this I begged the reader to place the facsimiles side by side and see for himself how much one "script" differs from the other "script," and what value he thinks ought to be attached to this latest argument. For myself, I said, I venture to think it might "be represented by a *minus* quantity." The Canon is much aggrieved by this. "I point out," he says, "that on two consecutive days he (Shakspeare) signed his name in two different scripts, and I suggest the inference that the Stratford player who signed these documents was also the dramatist, because we know from manuscripts of plays still extant in the British Museum, that dramatists employed two scripts, one for the text and one for stage

directions. I place facsimiles of the two signatures side by side in my book for comparison, and more I cannot do. I cannot stand by Mr. Greenwood and point to the differences in the *h*, the *a*, the *p*."

Now, my first remark upon this is that the use of the word "script" here seems to me to attribute a somewhat exaggerated importance to the difference which exists between the two signatures in question. One speaks of the difference between the old English, or German, script used by Shakspeare, for example, and the Italian script, but I humbly submit that to say that these two signatures of Shakspeare are written "in two different scripts," because "the *h*, the *a*, and the *p*" are not of the same formation in each, though both are in the old English script, is to make a somewhat misleading use of the word; and the alleged fact that "dramatists employed two scripts, one for the text and one for stage directions," appears to me quite irrelevant in this connection. However, all I did was to beg the reader to place the facsimiles side by side, and to judge for himself as to the value of the argument which the Canon based upon them, and I ventured to express my own opinion as above set forth. Canon Beeching, apparently, sees great offence in this. "I understand," he says, "a rudeness in the words, but not the words." Well,

the words appear to me quite intelligible, but the accusation of "rudeness" really seems to indicate a hypertrophied fastidiousness in my canonical censor. However, I have certainly no desire to be impolite, and if the expression "represented by a *minus* quantity," offends, I very willingly withdraw it, and will only say that, having once more carefully examined the two signatures in question, it seems to me that the argument which the Canon founds upon them has no value whatever, and that the "inference" which he seeks to draw from them seems quite unwarranted. And again I say let the reader make the examination for himself.

#### **"Insanitary Stratford"**

I need not waste words over the two next points of contention. In the first chapter of my book, "*The Shakespeare Problem Restated*," I endeavour to place before the reader such facts as are known of the birthplace, family, and surroundings of "Shakspere of Stratford," that is of the *environment* in which he was born, in which he spent the first twenty-three years or so of his existence, and to which he voluntarily returned while still in the prime of life. In doing so I quoted authorities to show that at that time Stratford was a dirty, squalid place (among

others Halliwell-Phillipps, to the effect that "the sanitary condition of the thoroughfares was, to our present notions, simply terrible"), and that its inhabitants were, for the most part, illiterate. Upon this Canon Beeching conceived himself justified in setting before his readers as my first argument to prove that Shakspeare of Stratford was not the author of the Plays and Poems of Shakespeare, "(1) The town of Stratford was insanitary!" And he is, or professes to be, of the same opinion still. Either, he says, I ought to have called my book, not *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, but *Loose Meditations on the facts of Shakespeare's* [i.e., Shakspeare's] *Life*, or he was right in cataloguing this as my argument No. 1. He might well have expanded this contention. I mention, for instance, that Shakspeare married a woman older than himself, and also that that woman presented him with twins. Canon Beeching ought, surely, to have introduced these facts into his catalogue of my arguments. Thus: "(2) Shakspeare married a woman eight years older than himself. (3) Shakspeare's wife bore him twins. Such are the arguments advanced by Mr. Greenwood to prove that Shakspeare was not the author of Hamlet!" I do not question that, according to Canon Beeching's ideas, it is quite fair to select

isolated facts in the story in this way, and to set them forth, apart from their context, as though advanced by me, separately and *singillatim*, as individual arguments in my case, and it greatly simplifies my task to be able to set before the reader this specimen of his conception of just and intelligent criticism.<sup>1</sup>

### Jonson's Ode to Bacon

Concerning Jonson's Ode to Bacon on his sixtieth birthday very few words need be said. I asked "What was 'the brave cause of joy' of which Jonson writes, 'let it be known, for 'twere a narrow gladness kept thine own'?" And I suggested, as a plausible answer, that, four days after this birthday celebration, Bacon was created Viscount St. Alban; that Bacon, possibly, and perhaps probably, knew of his coming promotion, and had confided it to Jonson, who, thereupon, cries, "Let it be known . . . in raising him the wisdom of my King." Canon Beeching will not have this explanation at any price. "There may," he says, "be 'wisdom' in making a wise man Chancellor, but not in making him a Viscount." I congratulate the

<sup>1</sup> I should add that in his own book (p. 83), Canon Beeching thinks it material to chronicle the fact that "Stratford was notoriously insanitary." Yet he does not call his work *Loose Meditations on the Facts of Shakespeare's Life*!

Canon on the thoroughness of his democratic principles. But though he may be quite right in thinking that there is no wisdom in making a wise man a Viscount, I apprehend it cannot be doubted that others, both now and heretofore, have imagined that to confer a title upon an eminent man is a wise exercise of the royal prerogative, and Jonson may not have attained to the same degree of enlightenment as Canon Beeching with regard to these matters. The Canon, however, is "quite sure that 'let it be known' is explained by the line that follows,<sup>1</sup> and means simply that the birthday of a Lord Chancellor, and such a Lord Chancellor is more than a private event," *i.e.*, according to the Canon's interpretation, Jonson implores the genius of the "ancient pile" to let that fact be known which he, and, doubtless, many others, had come together expressly to celebrate, *viz.*, that this was Bacon's sixtieth birthday! Pray tell the world that Bacon is sixty years of age, he cries! Well, I am content to leave it to the reader to say which of the two explanations he prefers. Quite possibly neither is the true one.

<sup>1</sup> The lines that follow are:—

"For 'twere a narrow gladness kept thine own,  
Give me a deep-crown'd bowl, that I may sing,  
In raising him, the wisdom of my king."

**Shakspere and Richard Field**

Far more important is it to examine the witnesses whom Canon Beeching calls to prove the fact of the identity of the player with the poet. The first of these is Richard Field, and the argument runs thus: Richard Field was a native of Stratford, and did not leave that place till he was fifteen; his father and Shakspere's father were acquainted; Richard Field published *Venus and Adonis*. This is "strong corroborative evidence that the poet of *Venus and Adonis* and the Stratford youth were the same person." To this I replied (*In re Shakespeare*, p. 56) that, in the first place, it is not proved that "Henry Fielde of Stratford, tanner," whose goods were valued by John Shakspere and two others, in 1592, was the father of Richard Field. Canon Beeching does not think he "need argue this probability," but he does not condescend to notice the rest of my argument, which is, that, assuming the identity of this Henry Field with the father of Richard Field, the evidence, nevertheless, appears to be of very little worth. For what does it amount to? Richard Field, as it seems, left Stratford and went to London, as a boy of fifteen, some eight years before Shakspere abandoned his home. Shakspere left Stratford about 1587. Five years after that, in 1592, John



Shakspeare, with two others, is employed to take an inventory of Richard Field's father's goods. And this is cited as though it were conclusive evidence that William Shakspeare was personally acquainted with Richard Field, and almost conclusive that he wrote *Venus and Adonis*, having regard to the fact that the poem was published by Richard Field! As to that last allegation, however, there is something more to be said. The *Stationers' Register* proves that Richard Field, on April 18th, 1593, acquired the copyright in *Venus and Adonis*, and that on June 25th, 1594, he assigned that copyright to John Harrison, Senior, and I apprehend I am absolutely correct in saying that, though Field printed the poem, at his printing office at Ludgate, the real publisher thereof was this John Harrison of the "White Greyhound" in St. Paul's Churchyard, where, as the title-page of the 1593 Quarto informs us, the work was "to be sold." As Mr. H. R. Tedder puts it, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Field "printed three Editions of *Venus and Adonis*, and the first of *Lucrece* for John Harrison," the publisher.<sup>1</sup> I think, too, it is fair to say that if Field and the author of *Venus*

<sup>1</sup> The first quarto of *Venus and Adonis* was, as the title page tells us, "imprinted by Richard Field, and are to be sold at the signe of the White Greyhound in Paule's Churchyard." The first edition of *Lucrece* was "printed by Richard Field, for

*and Adonis* had been close personal friends we should hardly have expected to find Field parting with his copyright in the poem ; rather we should have expected to find him in possession of the copyright of *Lucrece* also. Moreover, not one of the quarto plays came from Field's press. Actor-manager Shakspeare did not, apparently, care to employ him on behalf of his company. Canon Beeching, at page 48 of his book, speaks of this Richard Field as Shakespeare's "school-friend." This is a characteristic illustration of the manner in which Stratfordian biography is written. There is not a tittle of evidence to show that Field was at school with Shakspeare, or at all, for the matter of that. But he *might have been*, therefore he *was* !

Of course, if Shakespeare, who dedicated the first heir of his invention to the great Earl of Southampton, was, in truth, Shakspeare of Stratford, it is, perhaps, probable that he knew Field, who printed the poem for his publisher Harrison. But that is just the point at issue. On the whole, therefore, it seems to me that I was amply justified in saying that there is no evidence showing any personal acquaintance between William Shakspeare and Richard Field.

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John Harrison, and are to be sold at the signe of the White Greyhound in Paule's Church-yard." It is obvious that Harrison was the real publisher in both cases.

“ Parnassus ” again

Canon Beeching's next witness is the unknown dramatist who wrote the *Parnassus* plays, but I have already dealt so fully with this matter that I am content to leave it as it stands. Canon Beeching observes that the most important of the references is “ the saying of the actor Kemp, which identifies the player and playwright.” It must not be forgotten, however, that it is not in truth, “ the saying of the actor Kemp,” but the saying which is put by the University playwright into the mouth of the performer who took the part of the actor Kemp in this curious old play. For the rest I can only refer to what I have already written on this supposed identification of the player with the poet.<sup>1</sup>

Davies of Hereford

The next witness cited is John Davies of Hereford. Now I have always admitted that Davies's epigram, addressed to “ Our English Terence, Mr. Will Shake-speare,” is one of the strongest passages which can be cited in support of the received doctrine of authorship. I am not so foolish as to shut my eyes to the fact that there are grave difficulties in the way of the negative case. On the other hand, as a well-known

<sup>1</sup> See *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, p. 319 seq. and *In re Shakespeare*, p. 61 and ante p. 70 et seq.

author, highly distinguished in law, literature, and politics (whose name I wish I were at liberty to quote), writes to me: "The difficulties in the way of *Shakspeare* are indeed enormous." I think it is a pity that the champions of the orthodox faith refuse to recognise that fact, and that some of them, especially those who are not in the front rank of literature or criticism, think it becomes them to speak of the unbeliever as necessarily a fool or a fanatic, or both, although they are aware that men far more distinguished than themselves, and haply more competent to judge, have been quite unable to accept the orthodox belief in this matter.

As to Davies of Hereford, his epigram is a very curious one, and contains cryptic allusions which nobody has been able to explain. It is addressed to "our English Terence, Mr. Will Shake-speare," and was published about 1611, when William Shakspeare, at the age of forty-seven, was seeking retirement in the apparently congenial society of the small tradesmen of "illiterate" Stratford. Davies, addressing "good *Will*," informs him, "in sport," as he says, that, as "some say," if he, "*Will*" to wit, had "not played some kingly parts in sport," he had been "a companion for a *King*," and "been a King among the meaner sort." The first "King "

is thrown into italics, which is rather curious. Old writers sometimes put all their important nouns into italics, but this is not the explanation here, because, in the first six lines of the epigram, “*Will*” and the first “*King*” (but not the second) are alone italicized. It has been suggested that Davies is alluding to somebody of the name of King, or to the King’s Players; or he may, of course, mean King James the First. Probably, being a scholar, he had Horace’s line in his mind, “*at pueri ludentes Rex eris aiunt*,” where we have both the “King” and the allusion to players, *i.e.*, in this instance boys in play.

In any case, even if “Mr. Will Shake-speare” had not, as Davies says he had, disqualified himself to be “a companion for a *King*,” he would only have been “a king *among the meaner sort*,” which does not seem to place him very high in Davies’s estimation,<sup>1</sup> though in the four last lines he praises him for having “no rayling, but a rainging Wit,” concluding thus:—

“*And honesty thou sow’st, which they do reape ;  
So to increase their Stocke, which they do keepe.*” (*sic.*)

<sup>1</sup> Very apposite here is the following from Florio’s Montaigne’s Essays:—“As enterlude-plaiers, you shal now see them on the stage play a King, an Emperor, or a Duke, but they are no sooner off the stage, but they are base rascals, vagabond abjects, and porterly hirelings, which is their naturall and originall condition.”—Bk. I. ch. 42.

What the real meaning of all this is I do not know, and the commentators shed no light on the matter. Of course, if this obscure epigram was meant to be taken literally, "at its face value," and bears no covert significance for the initiated, then, no doubt, it may be legitimately cited as *prima facie* evidence in support of the contention that Davies held the belief that William Shakspeare (assuming it is the player who is addressed) was, as Terence was, a writer of Comedies; though seeing that "Shakespeare" was in 1611 at the height of his fame, it is rather curious that Davies should have likened him to the Latin Comedian, as though he had never written such plays as *Hamlet*, *Lear*, and *Othello*. Moreover, if he was to be likened to a Latin Comedian, surely Plautus is the writer with whom he should have been compared.

Here the further question arises; what is the value of Davies's belief in this matter, even assuming it to have really been in favour of the orthodox contention? What knowledge of Shakspeare had he, if any? And what opportunities had he of knowing the facts as to the authorship of the Plays? And on these matters we have, unfortunately, no evidence whatever to guide us.

### The Case of Terence

In connection, however, with the curious, and, at first sight, inappropriate comparison of "Shakespeare" to Terence, it is worthy of remark that Terence is the very author whose name is alleged to have been used as a mask-name, or *nom de plume*, for the writings of great men who wished to keep the fact of their authorship concealed. This allegation is distinctly made by Montaigne, the translation of whose Essays by Florio was well known to Davies. The following is the passage referred to: "If the perfection of well-speaking might bring any glorie suitable unto a great personage, Scipio and Lelius would never have resigned the honour of their Comedies, and the elegancies and smooth-sportfull conceits of the Latine tongue, unto an Affrican servant: For, to prove this labour to be theirs, the exquisite eloquence and excellent invention thereof doth sufficiently declare it: and Terence himself doth avouch it: And I could hardly be removed from this opinion. It is a kind of mockerie and injurie, to raise a man to worth, by qualities mis-seeming his place, and unfitting his calling, although for some other respects praise-worthy; and also by qualities that ought not to be his principall object."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Montaigne had warrant for his assertion concerning Terence from Quintilian. "In Comœdia maxime claudicamus, licet

And further on occur the words I have already quoted as an example of the application of the word "quality" to writing: "I have in my time seen some, who by writing did earnestly get both their titles and living, to disavow their appentissage, mar their pen, and affect the ignorance of so vulgar a qualitie." Was there, perchance, some great personage, some "Scipio" or "Lelius" behind "our English Terence," who felt likewise constrained to disavow his appentissage to playwriting, and affect ignorance of so vulgar a quality?<sup>2</sup>

### Shakspere and Lord Southampton

Canon Beeching's fourth witness is Nicholas Rowe, who tells a story that "my Lord Southampton at one time gave him (Shakspere) a thousand pounds, to enable him to go through with a purchase which he heard he had a mind to." Rowe thinks this story so "singular" that he tells us he would "not have ventured

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. . . Terentii scripta ad Scipionem Africanum referantur" (Inst. orat. x., 1., 99). It was a very old tradition that both Scipio and Lælius published under the name of Terence. See p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> See Florio's *Montaigne*, Book I., chap. xxxix. Florio's translation was published in 1603. Davies's Epigram is in *The Scourge of Folly* (about 1611). This was, as we are told, a work "consisting of *Satyricall* Epigrams, and others."



to have inserted" it, if he had not been "assur'd" that it was handed down by Sir William D'Avenant. D'Avenant died some five years before Rowe was born, and Shakspeare himself had been dead nearly one hundred years before Rowe essayed to write a memoir of him. I, therefore, characterised this story, which, as I have tried to show, is not reconcilable with the known facts of Shakspeare's life, as a "piece of hopeless hearsay." Canon Beeching demurs to this, "because," he writes, "as Mr. Greenwood remembers, when it suits him, (p. 46) 'Rowe tells us (this and other things)<sup>1</sup> from the information of Betterton, who . . . had very early opportunities of inquiry from Sir W. Davenant.'"

From this the reader would naturally suppose that Canon Beeching is quoting my own words, but that would be a false inference. The passage beginning "Rowe tells us," is a quotation from Farmer's essay, and relates exclusively to Shakspeare's acting. In its unmangled state, and as quoted by me, it reads as follows, "Nor have we any reason to suppose that he did act *exceedingly well*. Rowe tells us from the information of

<sup>1</sup> The brackets are the Canon's. I note, with some satisfaction, that according to Professor Wallace's recently published articles in *The Times*, Shakspeare, during the later years of his life at any rate, made some £5,000 or £6,000 a year of our money by his share in the Globe and the Blackfriars theatres.

Betterton, *who was inquisitive into this point*, and had very early opportunities of inquiry from Sir W. Davenant, that he was no extraordinary Actor." Rowe does not cite Betterton as his authority for the Southampton story. He may, of course, have had it from Betterton, who may have had it from Davenant, but he does not say so. In any case I venture to set it aside as "evidently just a bit of Stratfordian mythology," and I feel myself amply warranted in repeating that there is not a scrap of evidence properly so-called, showing that Shakspeare the actor was intimate with or patronised by the Earl, unless, assuming the point at issue, we assert that such evidence is to be found in the dedication of *Venus and Adonis*.

### The Jonsonian Riddle

I cannot go over again the well-trodden ground of Jonson's utterances prefixed to the First Folio. I will content myself, therefore, with a correction and a protest.

Canon Beeching sets before his readers, as a quotation from my book, the following words: "It was not really player Shakspeare whom he (Jonson) had in mind when he writes of the '*Sweet Swan*,' whose reappearance upon the Thames he so much desires." But I should prefer

this to stand as I wrote it, viz. : " I have suggested, as others have suggested before me . . . that it was not really player Shakspeare," etc. This, however, is a small matter, but the Canon goes on to write, " Mr. Greenwood seems to think he has a perfect right to call a dead man of genius a liar, provided he adds that he may have thought his lies justifiable. . . . It would not have been safe for Mr. Greenwood to call Jonson a justifiable liar when he was alive." Now I have never said that Jonson told " justifiable lies," nor have I ever called him a " justifiable liar." Had I been exceptionally muddled-minded, and had I been ignorant of the very rudiments of elementary logic, I might possibly have done so, but I trust that, without undue assumption, I may express the hope that I shall not be considered to suffer from such excessive mental and ratiocinative infirmities.

### What is " a Lie " ?

The late Professor Freeman used to say that when people said of a sport (fox-hunting, for example) that it was no doubt *cruel*, but that it might be justified on this ground or on that, they merely showed that they had not learnt how to reason at all. And why ? Because the word " cruel " carries its own condemnation with

it. Because "cruelty" means the unjustifiable infliction of pain. Therefore, to say that a thing is "cruel" and yet "justifiable," involves a contradiction in terms. Similarly, a "lie," as I supposed every tyro in reasoning knew, means an unjustifiable falsehood. A "lie," therefore, can never be "justifiable." If Canon Beeching by making a false statement could save a woman from outrage and murder, would he refuse to make that false statement on the ground that it would be a "lie?" If so, I am sorry for him. For myself, I should consider such a falsehood not only "justifiable," but one which it would be my duty to tell. It certainly would be no "lie."<sup>1</sup>

Canon Beeching is quite welcome to lecture me on my "manners,"—it no doubt pleases him and it certainly does not hurt me,—but I do trust that in future we may have no more childish and irrational talk about "justifiable lies." It brings to one's mind a story told of the late Lord Westbury, while still at the Bar as Sir Richard Bethell. Having occasion to argue

<sup>1</sup> As to the *suggestio falsi* on the part of the writer of the Folio Preface, Canon Beeching seems to forget that that expression is not mine, but the Cambridge Editors'. "As the 'setters forth,'" they write, "are thus convicted of a '*suggestio falsi*' in one point, it is not improbable that they may have been guilty of the like in another."

a case before a Judge of whose reasoning capacities he had a very poor opinion he turned to Sir Hugh Cairns, who was on the other side. "Cairns," said he, "don't you find it rather *irksome* (laying great stress upon the word), having to argue before these men?"<sup>1</sup>

### Henslowe's Diary

With regard to "The Silence of Philip Henslowe," I have little to add. I note that Canon Beeching entirely dissents from the opinions expressed by Halliwell-Phillipps, and Mr. Lee, to the effect that Shakespeare began as playwright by writing dramas for Henslowe, and that "the Rose Theatre was doubtless the earliest scene" of his "pronounced successes alike as

<sup>1</sup> Sir Edward Sullivan, with the same assumption of virtuous indignation, talks in the same nonsensical way about my "thrusting a deliberate lie into the mouth of Ben Jonson" (*Nineteenth Century*, April, 1909, p. 632). Now Scott, in his general Preface to the *Waverley Novels*, (p. xxvii.), tells us how when some indiscreet person would ask him whether he was the author of any one of those works, at a time when he still desired to retain his anonymity, he considered himself justified in making a flat denial of the fact. "I therefore considered myself entitled, like an accused person put upon trial, to refuse giving my own evidence to my own conviction, and flatly to deny all that could not be proved against me." Sir Edward Sullivan, and Canon Beeching, therefore, unless all they have said, and shouted, on this subject be mere pretence and bluster, must style Walter Scott "a deliberate liar." I certainly do not, although he certainly made some deliberate false statements.

actor and dramatist," as Mr. Lee says. This, certainly, makes Henslowe's silence slightly less difficult to explain; but the Canon tells us that "*I Henry VI* (which Shakespeare renovated)" was produced at Henslowe's theatre between March 3rd, 1592, and January 31st, 1593, and that "the appropriate entry is made in Henslowe's diary." Well, the diary makes reference to takings at sixteen performances of "harey the VI.," but, unfortunately, Henslowe, who mentions all the other dramatists of his time, did not think it "appropriate" to make any mention of Shakespeare, whether as author or "renovator" of the play. For myself I confess I doubt very much whether Shakespeare had anything whatever to do with *I Henry VI*, which the Canon tells us, as though it were ascertained matter of fact, that he "renovated"; but, nevertheless, for reasons already fully stated, I look upon Henslowe's silence as extraordinary, and as a factor in the negative case which the sceptics are fully entitled to pray in aid.<sup>1</sup>

**"Sufflaminandus erat"**

The last matter of controversy, as between Canon Beeching and myself, to which I desire

<sup>1</sup> See *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, chap. xii. "The Silence of Philip Henslowe." *In re Shakespeare*, p. 88.

to refer here, relates to Jonson's celebrated remarks *De Shakespeare Nostrati*; "wherein he flowed with that facility that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped. '*Sufflaminandus erat*' as Augustus said of Haterius." I had maintained that these words "undoubtedly refer to speech and not to writing." Not so, says Canon Beeching; "Jonson applies the phrase '*sufflaminandus erat*' not to speech, whether on the stage or in a tavern, but to writing. Indeed, he gives an example of what he means in a passage out of *Julius Cæsar*." This appears to me a most surprising contention. Was it *in writing* that Aterius had to be stopped? Certainly not. The passage in Seneca to which Jonson makes reference shows this very clearly. "*Tanta illi erat velocitas orationis ut vitium fieret. Itaque D. Augustus optime dixit, Aterius noster Sufflaminandus est.*" What is the meaning of *sufflaminare*? I turn to my Andrews's Latin Dictionary, and I find, "to stay, check, repress in *speaking*"; and Lewis and Short give exactly the same words. And what says our good friend Forcellinus? "*Sufflamino per translationem accipitur pro comprimere.*" I know Canon Beeching's intense aversion to *Authority*, and, really, no authority is required here, but, nevertheless, I think the following from M. Ménage, who had no small

reputation as a scholar, is not without interest. "Pour moi, quand j'entends un grand *parleur*, je dis ce que Cicéron disoit d'un certain Aterius qu'on ne pouvoit plus *faire taire*, quand il avoit une fois commencé *a parler*: *Aterius noster sufflaminandus est*. Il faut faire a cet homme ce que l'on fait aux roues de Carosses a la descente d'une montagne, il faut l'enrayer."<sup>1</sup>

I state, then, without fear of contradiction from any competent scholar, that *sufflaminare* means to repress in *speaking*, and that, therefore, Jonson must have been alluding to Shakspeare's volubility in conversation, whether "at a tavern," or elsewhere. The "passage out of *Julius Cæsar*," quoted by Jonson and referred to by Canon Beeching, has nothing to do with this question. Jonson has passed on from Shakspeare's too facile flow of language to another point of criticism. "Many times he fell into those things could not escape laughter"; and then he gives the instance from *Julius Cæsar*, though, inasmuch

<sup>1</sup> *Menagiana*, Vol. II., p. 197, Edition 1762. Ménage makes a slip in attributing Seneca's words to Cicero. He gives very correctly the primary meaning of *sufflaminare*, viz.: "l'enrayer," to put the drag on. I gave as a good English vernacular equivalent for *sufflaminandus erat* "he had to be shut up." Thereupon Sir Edward Sullivan tells me that I must have forgotten my Latin. I may have done so, but certainly this does not show it. Sir Edward cannot even quote me correctly. He cites me as having written "he ought to be shut up"!



as there is no such passage in the play, as we know it, some have suggested that Shakspeare the player misquoted the line, "know Cæsar doth not wrong," etc., upon the stage. In any case, it seems not a little absurd to imagine that the words, "it was necessary he should be stopped," referred to the necessity of stopping Shakspeare (or "Shakespeare" !) in his *writing* ! But the quotation from Seneca clearly shows that *speech* is intended.

I here leave both the gentle Canon, and Sir Tittlebat Toplofty. If I have been sedulous to answer them it is because, being convinced that, to put it shortly, player Shakspeare did not write *Hamlet*, or *Venus and Adonis*, or the *Sonnets*, I wished to show that their popgun criticism has made no breach in the walls of the negative argument,—an argument which appears to me to be neither wild nor fantastic, but, when all the conditions and all the perplexities of the strange problem are considered, quite in accordance with sober reason, and sound common sense.<sup>1</sup>

### The very latest of "orthodox" Biographers

And now, before writing my epilogue, I must take note of yet a new contribution to the moun-

<sup>1</sup> I observe, by the way, that neither of these two doughty critics have made any attempt to account for or explain the large amount of revision to which certain of the Shakespearian plays were subjected, after the death of Shakspeare of Stratford and before the publication of the Folio.

tainous pile of Shakespearian literature. I allude to Mr. Frank Harris's work, *The Man Shakespeare and His Tragic Life-Story*. This has been called, and not without reason, a very remarkable book. Mr. Harris is of the "orthodox" school, so far, at least, as the question of Shakespearian authorship is concerned. He believes, apparently, that Shakespeare wrote all the Plays contained in the Folio of 1623, and he has no doubt that William Shakspeare of Stratford was the author. He thinks that Shakspeare (the "Stratford rustic") wrote *Venus and Adonis* before he left Stratford! He follows the ruck in quoting Chettle's Preface to the *Kind-Hart's Dream*, as though it contained an allusion to Shakspeare. He tells us that Jonson's "small Latin and less Greek,"<sup>1</sup> was a "sneer" at Shakespeare. He himself sneers at those biographers who represent Shakspeare as "a good business man," because his works show, amongst other things, that he "hated tradesmen."

He conceives that the real Shakespeare, and what manner of man he was, and what sort of life he led, are to be found revealed in the works themselves, and in those works he has found "the man," and many details of his "tragic

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Harris twice misquotes this as "little Latin," etc.

life-story." As the result of his studies, and his penetration, he tells us that Shakespeare was "inordinately vain and self-centred"; that he was "a snob of the purest English water," and that his snobbishness was only matched by his inordinate and unrestrained sensuality. He tells us, further, as though it were an ascertained fact of Shakespeare's "life-story," (and for Mr. Harris, of course, "Shakespeare" is player Shakspeare of Stratford), that he formed a *liaison* with Mary Fitton, one of Queen Elizabeth's Maids of Honour, and that his mad and consuming desire for her was the passion of his whole life, which "burned him out, as one is burnt to ashes at the stake." And yet he could not be true to her. "Shakespeare admired Mary Fitton as intensely as he desired her; yet he could not be faithful to her for the dozen years his passion lasted. Love and her soft hours drew him irresistibly again and again; he was the ready spoil of opportunity." But his "insane desire" of "his gipsy wanton" "tortured him to nervous breakdown, and to madness." And "when at length he won to peace, after ten years, it was the peace of exhaustion." Shakespeare was "a neuropath," and suffered from "erotic mania."

This is, indeed, a brand-new portrait of the myriad-minded man, who "was not of an age

but for all time," the man who did (as we used to be told)

" . . . the stars and sunbeams know,  
Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure ; "

but if there is evidence in support of its authenticity by all means let it be painted.

But what are the facts ? There is not a single scrap, not the smallest scintilla, of evidence to connect Shakspere (or " Shakespeare " either, for the matter of that) with Mistress Mary Fitton. Here is an instance of " the school of assumption " with a vengeance ! What is the basis which is considered sufficient to support all this wonderful superstructure ? Well, some persons, trying to read the dark enigma of the *Sonnets*, have assumed that " Mr. W. H. " addressed by Thomas Thorpe, was William Herbert, who in 1601 succeeded to the Earldom of Pembroke. Mr. Sidney Lee seems to me to have completely knocked the bottom out of that theory, which was, in any case, the merest guesswork.<sup>1</sup> But having assumed that Thomas Thorp, " the piratical publisher," was on these terms of easy familiarity with the great Earl, the next step was to settle the identification of the " dark lady " of the *Sonnets*. This was quite simple. Mary Fitton was at one time Pembroke's mistress, and bore him a child.

<sup>1</sup> See his *Illustrated Life*, Appendices VI. and VII.

Of course, therefore, she must have been the "dark lady." It is true that we are told, on the authority of Lady Newdegate, that "two well-preserved portraits of Mary Fitton . . . reveal a lady of fair complexion with brown hair, and grey eyes."<sup>1</sup> But what of that? Mr. Harris says she was a dark "gipsy" beauty, with black hair and eyes. He gathers this from the *Sonnets*, and, of course, as "Mr. W. H." is Pembroke, the "dark lady" must be Pembroke's mistress. Then, as the *Sonnets* reveal further that Shakespeare has a *liaison* with the "dark lady," it follows, by sure logical process, that Shakspeare of Stratford, the author of the *Sonnets* had a *liaison* with Mary Fitton. Q.E.D.

Here we have at once established the vast superiority of the "orthodox" Stratfordian critics over the heretics, whether wild "Baconians" or those of the "Agnostic" or negative school. The "orthodox," it will be perceived, advance along the lines of evidence only; they make no unwarranted assumptions, no fantastic guesses. "Mr. Harris," says a reviewer, "has supplied *scientific methods* to the delineation of Shakespeare. In the result we see the poet as he was, 'with his imperial intellect and small snobberies, his giant vices and paltry self-deceptions, his sweet gentle-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 338. n. 2.

ness and long martyrdom.' " Nor would Sir Edward Sullivan for a moment think of classing the brilliant author among "the defamers of Shakespeare." It is no defamation of Shakespeare to say that he was a neurotic snob, a sort of High Priest among the decadents, so long as you are careful to breathe no shadow of doubt that the Shakspeare of Stratford was the writer of *Hamlet*. But those who, while they look upon Shakespeare as the world's great poet, mankind's great guide, philosopher, and friend,

" Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,  
Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,  
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling place,"

yet venture to believe, on what they conceive to be solid and reasonable grounds, that "Shakespeare" stands for something higher and better and wiser than the Stratford player of the unedifying life-story, *they* are the wretches who should be for ever branded as the "defamers" of the object of their unbounded reverence!

Let me say at once that I have no quarrel with any man for representing either Shakspeare or Shakespeare as more given over to what Byron has termed "philogenitiveness" than King Solomon himself, if only he can produce evidence for it. But to concoct all this story about the man's all-absorbing, all-destroying

passion for Mary Fitton, out of mere wild and whirling guesswork, without a shred of evidence to support it, and to put this forward as Shakespearean biography, on "scientific" lines, does seem to me more outrageous than any literary crime ever perpetrated by the most fanatical Baconian. Mr. Harris says he finds it all in the *Plays*, as well as in the *Sonnets*. "Show me the man that is not passion's slave," wrote Shakespeare, and all the time he was thinking of his own mad passion for this "gipsy" beauty, by whom he was himself held in the bonds of slavery, struggle against them how he might! But I venture to say that a man of strong imagination, who takes all the *Plays and Poems* with the view of constructing Shakespeare's personality out of what he finds therein, could build up thence a new Shakespeare in accordance with any form that his imagination might choose to postulate or picture. The field is an immense one, and there is an immense latitude of choice! However, I commend this new Shakespeare biography to the orthodox critics and reviewers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> If this description of Shakespeare's character had been written by one of the "unorthodox" how those critics and reviewers would have reviled him! No language would have been adequate to express their horror of his blasphemy. In Mr. Harris it is only "the splendour of his daring" (*The Nation*, November, 6th, 1909). But then, of course, there is the *esprit de corps* of the log-rolling confraternity also to be reckoned with. An "outsider" writing in this style would have been "snowed under" by vituperative epithets.

**Mr. J. M. Robertson on the Learning of Shakespeare**

It only remains for me to say a few words with regard to some remarks made by my friend, Mr. J. M. Robertson, on "The Learning of Shakespeare," in his new edition of *Montaigne and Shakespeare*. Having referred to the very strong case made by Mr. E. A. Sonnenschein for the derivation of Portia's speech on "Mercy," in *The Merchant of Venice*, from Seneca's *De Clementia*, which I have fully dealt with in my book (pp. 94-95), he proceeds (p. 332), "Much less warranted than Mr. Sonnenschein's thesis is the proposition put by my friend, Mr. George Greenwood, *apropos* of the parallel between the two lines :

Not marble nor the gilded monuments.

Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme,

in Shakespeare's fifty-fifth Sonnet, and the familiar,

Exegi monumentum aere perennius

Regalique situ pyramidum altius, etc.

of Horace (*Odes*, iii. 30). 'It is quite clear,' writes Mr. Greenwood, 'that Shakespeare was familiar with the Odes of Horace.' Mr. Greenwood cannot mean to affirm that this very inexact parallel between two lines of Shakespeare and one of the most hackneyed quotations from Horace is a proof of 'familiarity.'" Mr. Robertson



is quite right in that last proposition. I certainly made no attempt to rest the postulated "familiarity" on such a slender basis. Mr. Robertson does not give a reference to the passage quoted by him, but if the reader will kindly turn to page 92 of *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, he will see that the assertion as to Shakespeare's familiarity with the Odes of Horace is a statement of my opinion only, made at the end of a note, and that I do not attempt to marshal the evidence in support of it. He will see, further, that, in the note in question, I deal with a dictum of a writer in *The Times Literary Supplement* to the effect that "The finale of the *Metamorphoses* (of Ovid) is certainly imitated or reproduced in Sonnet 55," and I express my opinion that in truth the sonnet is based upon Horace. In support of this proposition, and not of the general proposition which follows subsequently, and is quoted by Mr. Robertson, I cite not *two* lines, but *four* lines both of Shakespeare and Horace. I compare not only the words of Horace, "monumentum aere perennius regalique situ," etc., with Shakespeare's "gilded monuments of princes," but I further invite attention to the correspondence between Shakespeare's "Your praise shall find room, even in the eyes of all posterity," with Horace's, "usque ego postera crescā laude

recens." But, of course, it would be ridiculous to base an assertion of Shakespeare's familiarity with the Odes of Horace on this parallel alone. There are, however, many others, a very striking one being between Shylock's injunctions to Jessica (*Merchant of Venice*, ii. 5), and Horace, *Odes*, iii. 7, 29-30.

Lock up my doors ; and when you hear the drum,  
And the vile squeaking of the wry-neck'd fife,  
Clamber not you up to the casements then,  
Nor thrust your head into the public streets.

Surely nobody can doubt that this is taken from Horace's

Primâ nocte domum claude ; neque in vias  
Sub cantu querulæ despice tibîæ ;

whether Shakespeare took it from the original or from a translation.

This last instance is cited by the late Professor Churton Collins in his *Studies in Shakespeare* (p. 27). Mr. Robertson finds fault with me for having accepted Mr. Collins's essay on "The Learning of Shakespeare" in an uncritical manner, in my "desire to buttress the case for a highly cultured 'non-Stratfordian' author of the plays." I am willing to admit that there is some point in this animadversion, at least to this extent, that I referred my readers to Mr. Collins's essay, as a proof of a highly-cultured Shakespeare, with-

out making any attempt to subject it to a critical analysis of my own, although I set before the reader many passages cited in proof of Shakespeare's classical knowledge. I will admit further that Mr. Collins appears to me to press his conclusions too far, and that many of his parallelisms cannot be relied upon. But I have never pinned my faith on the truth of the propositions that "so far from Shakespeare having no pretension to classical scholarship he could almost certainly read Latin with as much facility as a cultivated Englishman of our own time reads French; that with some at least of the principal Latin classics he was intimately acquainted; that through the Latin language he had access to the Greek classics, and that of the Greek classics in the Latin versions he had, in all probability a remarkably extensive knowledge."<sup>1</sup> As to those propositions, it is true that I refer the reader

<sup>1</sup> *Studies in Shakespeare*, p. 3. Mr. Robertson comments that, "It might have occurred to Professor Collins that if Shakespeare, without having been to the University, actually read Latin habitually and with perfect facility, his fellow-players and friends would have had a special motive for proclaiming the fact." That might have occurred to Professor Collins certainly, but it certainly does not occur to those who believe that "Shakespeare" had no "fellow-players"! Again, says Mr. Robertson (p. 316), "Even a man who had learned to read Terence at school could not do it in middle life if he had not kept up the habit of reading Latin; and there is positively no reason to believe that Shakespeare did so." Substitute "Shakspeare" for "Shakespeare," and I most heartily agree!

to Mr. Collins's essay, and ask him to judge for himself. My point is that Shakespeare was, at any rate, a representative of the highest culture of his time. I have never put forward the proposition that Shakespeare was "a scholar" in the modern sense of the term. I have written, in words cited by Mr. Robertson, "The works show that Shakespeare was a man of the highest culture, of wide reading, much learning, and of remarkable classical attainments." I believe that is strictly true, except that I am willing to substitute "a wide familiarity with the classics" for "remarkable classical attainments." I wrote further, and these words are also quoted by Mr. Robertson (with the exception of those in brackets), "Never again, let us hope, shall we hear the amazing proposition put forward that Shakespeare had no knowledge of the classics . . . Should the advocates of the ignorant, uncultivated theory make a cheap retort (as to the limits of my comprehension, or of my classical knowledge) I will not vex myself, for I need only refer them to Mr. Churton Collins's illuminating articles." I see nothing to complain of here. Mr. Robertson admits that he does not himself entertain the idea of an ignorant, uncultivated Shakespeare, yet such a theory has been held and maintained by many, and to these at any

rate Mr. Collins's essay may, haply, be found illuminating. Mr. Robertson clings to Jonson's "small Latin and less Greek," in its literal sense. Well, I cannot now enter into a detailed argument as to Shakespeare's classical knowledge. Often as that question has been attacked, from one side or the other, in my opinion, notwithstanding Mr. Collins's essay, it has yet to be undertaken again. The "small Latin and less Greek" party dispose of all parallelisms cited between Shakespeare and classical authors by either postulating some "translation," known or unknown, which Shakespeare "doubtless" saw in manuscript, if not in print; or by dismissing them as mere "proverbial sayings," which had become current throughout the civilised world. As to the theory that Shakespeare took all his classical allusions from translations, and was unable to understand the originals, I will just refer the reader to two passages in Mr. Collins's Essays. Speaking of Farmer's celebrated Essay, he writes (p. 9), "On almost all the classical parallels which are really worth considering, he is silent. Of the very few which he is obliged to notice he disposes by assuming that Shakespeare had been raking in Ronsard, mediæval homilies, and the uncouth Scotch jargon of Douglas's Virgil. That a sensible man like Farmer should

not see that, if Shakespeare recalls the *Aeneid*, and the *Fasti*, the balance of probability is much more in favour of his having gone to the Latin than of his having troubled himself to spell out mediæval homilies and archaic Scotch, is indeed strange." Again (p. 23, n. 2) "In the manuscripts in the British Museum there are only two versions from classical dramatists which can be assigned to the sixteenth century—an anonymous version of Seneca's *Medea*, circa 1600, and a version of the greater part of the *Iphigenia in Aulis*, by Lady Lumley. In the Bodleian there are none at all. This seems proof positive that classical translations could not have circulated on a large scale, or more examples could scarcely have failed to make their way into these collections." Yet the "unlearned Shakespeare" school always call translations "from the vasty deep" to suit the exigencies of the occasion. Thus, if Professor Collins comments that Farmer "makes no reference to the fact that the *Rape of Lucrece* is directly derived from the *Fasti* of Ovid, of which at that time there appears to have been no English version," Mr. Robertson takes the word "appears" as "an indirect admission . . . that among the *many manuscript translations*, then in currency, there may very well have been one of the *Fasti*." But, if

not, he has another solution. Shakespeare "having decided to write a *Lucrece* as contrast to the *Venus*" may have "had a translation made for him"! In this easy manner difficulties are jauntily disposed of *per saltum*.<sup>1</sup>

As to the *Comedy of Errors*, performed in 1594, Shakespeare, of course, saw Warner's translation (published in 1595) in manuscript. The misfortune here is that not a single name, word, or line is taken from Warner's translation! Moreover, in the Folio, Antipholus of Ephesus appears as "Sereptus," evidently taken from "Menaechmus Surreptus" of Plautus, which *agnomen*, however, does not appear in Warner's translation. Then, again, Act III., Scene 1, seems to have been derived from another play of Plautus, the *Amphitruo*, to wit. But then, as a last resource, the "unlearned" school fall back upon the supposition that, if, as really seems manifest, Shakespeare could not have got his comedy from Warner's translation, he derived it from an old play called *The Historie of Error*, which was enacted before Queen Elizabeth "by the children of Powles" in 1576. Nothing at all

<sup>1</sup> *Montaigne and Shakespeare*, p. 314. The character of Pistol appears to have been taken from Centurio in *Celestina*, the Spanish play by Rojas. This was translated by Mabbe, but the translation was not issued till 1630. Critics therefore assume that Shakespeare was a friend of Mabbe's, and read the translation in MS. !

is known about this early play. So far as we can tell, its subject-matter may have been entirely different from that of *The Comedy of Errors*, but at any rate it may be invoked to save us from the possibility of having to admit that Shakespeare could read Plautus in the original! See how many strings to their bow these "small Latin" men have! *Primo avulso non deficit alter!*<sup>1</sup>

I will just refer to one other example to show how the question of Shakespeare's classical knowledge is treated by the "small Latiners."

"Stress," writes Mr. Robertson (p. 344 n.) "is still at times laid upon the 'most sure, the goddess' of Ferdinand in *The Tempest*, as copying Virgil's 'O dea certe,' and upon the further parallels in the contexts. Yet Farmer had pointed out that Stanyhurst (1583) translated the phrase 'No doubt, a goddess.' The point, however, is really too trivial for discussion: 'small Latin,' indeed, would have made Shakespeare acquainted with such a tag; and he may well have read the passage at school."

Now I would point out that it is not merely a question of "a tag." Let us examine the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Collins proves, in my judgment, that Shakespeare, both in *Lucrece* and in *The Tempest*, must have referred to Ovid in the original, and not only to Golding's translation.



passage in a little more detail. Ferdinand, seeing Miranda for the first time, exclaims

Most sure the goddess  
On whom these airs attend.

This is, certainly, a reproduction, from whatever source, of Virgil's "O, dea certe." But the parallel does not stop here. Ferdinand continues :—

My prime request  
Which I do last pronounce, is, O you wonder !  
If you be maid or no.

This corresponds to Virgil's,

O quam te memorem, virgo ! namque haud tibi vultus  
Mortalis, nec vox hominem sonat.

Miranda replies :—

No wonder, sir,  
But certainly a maid.

So too Venus, speaking in her feigned character, says,

Hand equidem tali me dignor honore ;  
Virginibus Tyriis mos est, etc.

She disclaims divinity, but reckons herself among the Tyrian virgins. She is " most certainly a maid."

Now this parallelism may seem " too trivial for discussion " to Mr. Robertson, but *quot homines tot sententiae*, and I am of a different opinion ; more especially in view of the fact that such parallel passages may be very greatly

multiplied, and that, when they are undoubtedly parallelisms, as in this instance, they are, taken collectively, extremely strong. Nor, in my opinion, are we justified in giving the go-by to Hallam's argument, with reference to the Latin "phrases unintelligible and improper, except in the case of their primitive roots which occur so copiously in the plays," those "forced Latinisms" as to which Hallam said that it is "not very likely that one who did not understand their proper meaning would have introduced them into poetry." Such language, said Theobald, "is the use of a writer whose mind is so thoroughly imbued with the Latin language, that he unconsciously incorporates it into English." Mr. Robertson ignores this side of the argument, which nevertheless to me appears to be very strong. (See *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, at p. 124).

However, as I have already said, it is by no means necessary to my case to show that Shakespeare was a classical "scholar." It is sufficient for me to show, what indeed seems to me to be proved to demonstration by "the works themselves," that Shakespeare was a man of the highest culture, of wide general knowledge, familiar with the classics, and familiar with the ways of Courts, and of the great ones of the earth,

and I ask again, as I have asked before, after laying ample foundation for the question, "putting aside for the moment the other plays . . . and fixing our attention only on *Love's Labour's Lost*, and the *Venus and Adonis* (which the reader who has not already done so should 'read, mark, learn and inwardly digest'), how is it possible to conceive that these works, which proclaim in every line that their author was a cultured and courtly aristocrat, were composed by William Shakspeare of Stratford?"<sup>1</sup> For myself, I own that it seems to me that reason is clamorous to the contrary. But that question I have discussed at length in my larger work.

### Critics and Reviewers

In conclusion, I would ask to be allowed to say one word as to the criticism to which my work has been subjected. When, as a humble, but life-long admirer of our greatest poet, "Shakespeare," I published a book in which I essayed to marshal, in something like logical form and order, the reasonable arguments which have been from time to time advanced to prove that the true Shakespeare is not to be found in the person of the Stratford player, I knew, of course, what was in store for me.

<sup>1</sup> *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, p. 69.

I knew that I was baring my devoted head to the thunderbolts of Olympian orthodoxy.

I was, therefore, fully prepared to receive hard knocks, and of the hard knocks of honest criticism I should be the last to complain. But I venture to enter a protest against the manner in which a certain section of those whose "quality" it is to criticise the works of others exercise their calling at the present day. A reviewer, and especially an anonymous reviewer, owes a duty not only to the author whose work is placed at his mercy, but to the public whom he undertakes to instruct. Of that duty, however, many of the critical, or rather I would say the *reviewing* confraternity (for the words have very different significations) seem to have no conception. A reviewer, I think it will be admitted, should at least read, and endeavour to understand, the arguments upon which it is his duty to comment. If, having done this, he honestly thinks that such arguments are baseless, or, may be, foolish and contemptible, nobody can blame him for saying so, and for expressing his opinion in very vigorous language, if he thinks well so to do. The intolerable thing is, as I have found to my cost, that many critics, as their observations reveal with unconscious ingenuousness and beyond the possibility of a doubt, do not take

the trouble either to read or to understand. They lead out, like wretched sheep for the slaughter, a whole row of ridiculous arguments and suggestions, which they attribute to the unhappy author whose work they are employed to criticise, but which are, in reality, mere phantoms of their own imagination. There are some, I fear, who do even worse ; scribes who

Write as if St. John's soul could still inspire  
And do from spite, what Mallet did for hire.<sup>1</sup>

But these, though some such unfortunately exist, are, as we may confidently hope, very few and far between ; for the anonymous critic who gives rein to spleen and personal malice has been well compared to the assassin who takes advantage of the darkness to stab his fellow-man in the back. One such, indeed, I know, though he is, happily, *notus mihi nomine tantum* ; a *soi-disant* " man of letters," who has written of me in a weekly illustrated paper things so malicious and so unfounded as to stamp him as far beyond the pale of controversy as by gentlemen conducted. But such as he—*homines quattuor litterarum*—may be fittingly dismissed with a line from old Ben Jonson :—

<sup>1</sup> I have changed one word in Byron's well-known lines  
How true that other couplet of his,

" A man must serve his time in every trade  
Save censure. Critics are all ready-made ! "

If they spake worse 'twere better, for of such  
To be dispraised is the most perfect praise."<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, I have, as I gratefully own, received much generous treatment both in the Press and in numerous letters from correspondents in the Old World, and in the New. The views which I have endeavoured to expound are, evidently, gaining ground day by day. *Eppur si muove.*

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<sup>1</sup> One well-known reviewer to whom these lines are certainly not in any way applicable, and who spoke very favourably of my work both in a weekly periodical and a daily newspaper, entirely changed his tone when he came to write for a certain Olympian journal, notoriously under high "orthodox" influence. Is it possible that our reviewers modify their opinions to suit the journals for which they write?

## PART II.

### A TYPICAL STRATFORDIAN ESSAY.

SINCE the foregoing pages were put into print there has appeared in *The Nineteenth Century* an article so characteristic of the "orthodox," or I might even say the "ultra-orthodox," Stratfordian school, that I am tempted to make use of it as an object lesson for those readers who will give heed to the apostolic injunction, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

The article to which I allude is entitled "Shakespeare in Warwickshire," by Rose G. Kingsley, and was published in *The Nineteenth Century* for May, 1910. The lady writes in a spirit of such child-like faith, and with such deep emotion with regard to Stratford-on-Avon, which she, of course, looks upon as the Mecca of all poetical pilgrimage, that one cannot help feeling for her that sympathy which a well-disposed rationalist must feel for every devout worshipper no matter at what shrine he humbly bows the knee.

“ Man was not made to question, but adore,” is the motto which speaks aloud in every line that she writes. But, alas, sense and sensibility do not always go hand in hand, and among the many disadvantages of uncritical sentiment this one is, unfortunately, conspicuous, namely that it is, perhaps, the most destructive solvent of historical truth.

### The Deer-Stealing Story

This article is, in fact, a *réchauffé* and restatement, not indeed of *all* but, of most of those discredited Stratfordian stories and traditions, with which we have been so long familiar. Miss Kingsley, for example, adopts and repeats without question, “ the well-known deer-stealing story told by Rowe . . . how that Shakespeare fell into ill-company and stole a deer from Sir Thomas Lucy’s park at Charlecote ; that he was prosecuted by Sir Thomas, and that, bearing a grudge against him in consequence, he has handed down his memory under the guise of Justice Shallow.” She does not deign to take notice of the fact that deer being animals *ferae naturae*, and, therefore, not the subject of property, Shakespeare could not have been prosecuted for “ deer-stealing,” unless he took his deer either in a “ forest ” (which is not suggested), or in “ a



park impaled," to wit, a *legal* deer-park, made by royal licence; and that Sir Thomas Lucy had no such park at Charlecote. She writes, indeed, "just before Shakespeare's flight to London, he [Sir Thomas] had enclosed his park, and put up new park gates to keep in his herd of deer," and I should very much like to know what authority she has for that statement. But even if true it is quite immaterial, for it appears to be certain that Sir Thomas Lucy had no legal deer-park at Charlecote. As the learned Mrs. Stopes writes, in a recent work, "He never had a deer-park to steal from, as we may learn from his father's will, from Leland's 'Itinerary,' and from his grandson's purchase of Fulbrooke in after years."<sup>1</sup> And Miss Kingsley herself, although she is either unaware of the criticism which seems plainly to show that the story is a myth, or gives it a lofty go-by, appears, nevertheless, to be not a little doubtful as to the *locus in quo*, for she tells us that Sir Thomas "also had some jurisdiction over Fulbrooke Park, just across the river, then ruininate. . . . Here also were deer, which any

<sup>1</sup> *Shakespeare's Warwickshire Contemporaries* (1907), p. 39. To the same effect Mr. Lee writes: "The Charlecote deer-park was of later date than the sixteenth century" (*Illustrated Life*, p. 25). But Mr. Lee, as I have shown elsewhere, falls into grievous error as to the law on the subject, being under the delusion that Shakspeare might have been prosecuted for deer-stealing from "a warren"! See *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, p. 24.

enterprising sportsman could hunt. And this renders it probable that the famous deer-stealing took place in Fulbrooke Park, *a much less serious offence*,<sup>1</sup> which would explain the fact of Shakespeare being able to escape to London. For, if he had been convicted of stealing a deer from Charlecote, *an enclosed park*, he would have been subjected to three months' imprisonment, to treble damages, and to find bail for seven years."

This is the sort of thing which is welcomed, and given currency to, by a leading periodical, because, forsooth, it is "orthodox." What matters it that it is a tissue of errors? If "Shakespeare," says the lady, stole a deer from Fulbrooke Park, "then ruin it," it would have been "a much less serious offence" than it would have been if he had stolen it from Charlecote, "an enclosed park!" What is the meaning of all this? What does the lady seek to imply by the words "then ruin it?" There was either a legal "park" at Fulbrooke or there was not. As a matter of fact there was not, for Fulbrooke had been disparked by Queen Mary. What then is the "much less serious offence"? There being no "park" at Fulbrooke there was no offence (*i.e.*, no criminal offence) at all, if

<sup>1</sup> My italics.

Shakspere took a deer there. And since there was no legal deer-park at Charlecote either, it seems perfectly clear that Shakspere could have committed no offence under the statute of which the lady seems to have heard, although she is obviously ignorant of its provisions, namely, 5 Elizabeth ch. 21. (See Sections 3 and 4.)

Now I could not, of course, have expected Miss Kingsley to refer to such a rankly heretical work as my *Shakespeare Problem Restated*, where she would have found the law on this subject very fully explained, and the facts I trust accurately set forth (p. 23 *et seq.*), but, surely, before she undertook to instruct the readers of *The Nineteenth Century* on this well-worn matter she might at least have consulted a critic of such high repute, such sound legal knowledge, and such unimpeachable orthodoxy as Malone; or if she could not find time to carry her researches so far back as the "Third Variorum," one would have supposed that, at any rate, before writing on "Shakespeare in Warwickshire," she would have consulted the pages of a work so easily obtainable, and of such cognate title, as Mrs. Stopes's "Shakespeare's Warwickshire Contemporaries." Had she done so she might have avoided some very obvious mistakes. But, after

all, *cui bono*? What matter a few errors more or less in orthodox Shakespearian biography?

In view of these objections, to which I have never seen any satisfactory answer, I have been constrained to give up "the well-known deer-stealing story" as but one among the many Stratfordian myths; yet I have not done so without some reluctance, for the belief cherished by Miss Kingsley in the "essentially human" tradition that Shakspeare was "much given to all unluckiness in stealing venison and rabbits," and was "oft whipt and sometimes imprisoned" at the behest of Sir Thomas Lucy (as old Archdeacon Davies has told us), is obviously quite consistent with my case. But the story seems to have grown up around the quite groundless hypothesis that Shallow with "the dozen white luces" in his coat must have been intended as a caricature of Sir Thomas Lucy, and as such it is typical of many others. For, as Mrs. Stopes observes, "the demand for particulars produced the supply"!

<sup>1</sup> As to the supposed identification of Sir Thomas Lucy with Justice Shallow, I entirely agree with Mrs. Stopes when she writes: "I am sure that 'Shallow' was not intended to represent Sir Thomas Lucy" (p. 33), and I would beg to refer Miss Kingsley to the arguments in support of that proposition, set forth by this other lady writer on "Shakespeare in Warwickshire." As to the suggestion that Shakspeare stole the deer at Fulbrooke, Mr. Lee justly characterises it as a "pure invention" (p. 26).

**The Crab-tree Story**

The second of "the two chief traditions which have survived about Shakespeare—neither of them strictly creditable but both essentially human" (I quote the words of Miss Kingsley), is the story that William Shakspeare, on one occasion, having walked over to the village of Bidford "to drink a match with one of the local clubs," like Roger the monk, "got excessively drunk" on mine host's strong ale, and found it convenient to pass the night under a "crab-tree," about a mile from Bidford, on his way home, for, like Sly, in the old play, "he hath drunke so much that he can go no further." This crab-tree used to be shown to visitors as "Shakespeare's Canopy," and a picture of it may be seen in Halliwell's colossal edition of Shakespeare's works. What better evidence of the truth of the story could we require? I, certainly, do not feel called upon to dispute it, and as for the lines quoted by Miss Kingsley, concerning "piping Pebworth, dancing Marston," etc., etc., they seem to me just such as Shakspeare of Stratford might have been expected to write.<sup>1</sup> Let us pass on, therefore, to matters of graver import.

<sup>1</sup> "O monstrous beast! how like a swine he lies!" wrote the author of the later play on the drunken Sly. Was this, peradventure, a reminiscence of his own condition upon this and other similar occasions?

## Chettle again

Miss Kingsley, it is almost unnecessary to say, cites Chettle's supposed allusion to Shakspeare, and cites it in the approved Stratfordian manner. "For Chettle, who had edited Green's *Groatsworth of Wit*, containing some offensive allusions to Marlowe and Shakespeare, apologised liberally to Shakespeare a few months later in 1592, in the preface to *Kind-Hart's Dreame*; saying that at that time he knew neither Marlowe nor Shakespeare, and that he does not now care to make Marlowe's acquaintance: but that as to Shakespeare, 'I am as sorry as if the original fault had been my fault, because myself have seen his demeanour no less civil, than he excellent in the quality he professes; besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness in dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his art.' "

Observe, kind reader, this story is cited as though it were a mere matter of history which nobody could possibly dispute; as though here were an undoubted allusion to "Shakespeare"—an indisputable contemporaneous testimony to his good character, and his "facetious grace in writing." Yet what are the facts? What is the plain, unvarnished truth? The truth is that Chettle makes no mention whatever of the

name of Shakespeare—or of Marlowe, for the matter of that; the truth is that the fancied allusion to Shakespeare is a mere inference which certain Stratfordian critics and biographers have found it very useful to draw, and which they have most unwarrantably drawn from the document in question; the truth is that they are always careful to keep this truth concealed, and so to cite the passage as to convey to the reader the belief that Chettle actually mentions Shakespeare by name, and that, therefore, there is no possible doubt about the matter; the truth is that I claim to have proved from the terms of the document itself that Chettle could not possibly have been referring to Shakespeare; and the truth is that of this opinion also were such eminent Shakespearian scholars and critics as Mr. Fleay and Mr. Howard Staunton, not to mention also a learned King's Counsel such as Mr. E. J. Castle.

This is indeed an amazing example of the manner and methods of Shakespearian biography. Yet if I venture to say that this is a dishonest method of writing history, Sir Tittlebat Toplofty is so possessed with virtuous indignation that he can hardly contain himself. "What! do you dare to call illustrious Shakespearian critics 'dishonest'?" No, Sir Tittlebat; I have made no charge of conscious dishonesty, for I know

well that where Shakespearian biography is concerned the normal canons of honest criticism are not held to apply ; but I do say, nevertheless, that in the case of all ordinary mortals it would be recognised that such a method of asserting a very doubtful inference as though it were an undoubted fact is not consistent with the obligations of common honesty. As to the lady who now, for the hundredth time, repeats this baseless assertion in *The Nineteenth Century*, and in the stereotyped Stratfordian manner, I can hardly find it in my heart to blame her, for she has merely followed the pernicious example of many blind leaders of the blind.\*

#### **Shakspeare and the Enclosure of the Common Fields**

I have, however, a still more serious charge to bring against Miss Kingsley. She has allowed her " Shaksperiolatry " to lead her (unconsciously it must have been) into making an inexcusable misquotation of documentary evidence. Every reader of Shaksperian biography remembers the story of the attempted enclosure of the common fields at Welcombe by William Combe and another ; and that Shakspeare was one of those

\* Those who would care to see the arguments as to Chettle's supposed allusion to Shakespeare fully set forth are referred to *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, p. 313, *et seq.* *In re Shakespeare, Beeching v. Greenwood*, ch. III., p. 94. And see *Ante*. p. 65.



who desired the enclosure to be made seems as certain as any fact in that biography can be. "Shakespeare," says Mr. Lee (p. 218), "joined with his fellow-owner Greene in obtaining from Combe's agent Replingham, in October, 1614, a deed indemnifying both against any injury they might suffer from the enclosure. But having thus secured himself against all possible loss, Shakespeare threw his influence into Combe's scale." Further, "It is certain," writes Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps (vol. I. p. 228, sixth edition), "that the poet [*i.e.* Shakspeare] was in favour of the enclosures, for, on December the 23rd, the Corporation addressed a letter of remonstrance to him on the subject, and another on the same day to a Mr. Mainwaring. The latter, who had been practically bribed by some land arrangements at Welcombe, undertook to protect the interests of Shakespeare, so there can be no doubt that the three parties were acting in unison."

In the face of this, and other cogent evidence, it certainly does seem extraordinary, even in Shaksperian biography where we have been taught not to be surprised at anything, that Miss Kingsley should write as follows:—"It was all wild forest land, an outlying bit of the Forest of Arden. And when, in 1614, an attempt was made to enclose Welcombe, the Corporation of

Stratford opposed the project on the ground of hardship to the poor ; and we find Shakespeare resisting the encroachment with all the vigour of a modern preserver of open spaces. . . . The whole episode is a ' touch of nature ' that brings one closer to the man ; and only those who have groaned over the enclosure of some beloved bit of woodland by the nineteenth century barbarians can fully appreciate the poet's righteous indignation against the Vandals of 1615."

This really is almost enough to take one's breath away. Observe once more, kind reader, that it all purports to be just plain narrative of undisputed facts ; and do not our hearts go out to the beloved poet, the defender of the rights of the poor, the protector of the beauties of nature against the threatened usurpation of " the vandals " ! And yet all the evidence before us goes to show that Shakspeare of Stratford (poet or not) was himself one of these very " Vandals of 1615."

What possible explanation is there, then, of such a gross perversion of history ? Well, there is a very simple one, and it is also a very instructive one, though it can hardly be called edifying. Shakspeare, it seems, had a cousin, one Thomas Greene who resided for a time at New Place, in Shakspeare's absence, and was clerk

to the Stratford Corporation. Greene kept a diary in which he has made sundry entries concerning the proposed enclosure of the common fields, and the part played by Shakspeare in that transaction. One of these entries, under date September 1615, is in these words: "Mr. Shakspeare tellyng J. Greene that I was not able to beare the encloseing of Welcombe"; *i.e.*, Thomas Greene makes a note to the effect that Shakspeare told J. Greene (who must not be confused with Thomas) that he, Thomas Greene to wit, was not able to bear the enclosing of Welcombe. It seems, therefore, that Thomas Greene, the clerk of the Corporation, was at one with the Corporation in opposing the enclosures, and felt so strongly on the matter that Shakspeare mentioned to J. Greene that he, Thomas, was not able to bear it. Now, how does this appear in Miss Kingsley's article? I will quote her words: "We find this further pathetic entry in Greene's diary on the 1st of September, 1615: 'Mr. Shakespeare told Mr. J. Greene that *he*<sup>1</sup> was not able to bear the enclosing of Welcombe.'" And thus we have that "touch of nature" which "brings one closer to the man." A "pathetic entry," indeed, and all obtained

<sup>1</sup> My italics. It will be noticed that the quotation is inaccurate in other respects also.

by the simple expedient of substituting "he" for "I!"

Let us, however, be quite fair. This is not the first time the suggestion has been made that Greene may have written "I" by mistake for "he." Dr. Ingleby was, I believe, the first to put forward the theory that Greene, being a careless scribbler, intended to write "he." But this, so far as I am aware, is the first time that that emendation, tentatively put forward as a possible one, has been quietly adopted, and read into the document so as to give it a meaning the very opposite of that which it bears as it stands in the original, and without the slightest intimation that the reading is mere conjecture, and that all the "authorities" are on the other side! This really strikes me as almost the *ne plus ultra* of Stratfordian audacity—for "where a lady's in the case" it would be ungallant to employ a stronger term.

Moreover, although one can, of course, quite understand the anxiety of the Stratfordians to disprove, if possible, that the object of their adoration was one of the "Vandals" of his day, there, nevertheless, appears to be no kind of warrant whatever for this deliberate falsification of an ancient document. "The pronoun in this entry," writes Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps (vol. II.

p. 382), "is considered by Mr. Edward Scott, of the British Museum, a very able judge, to be really the letter J," which is but another form of the letter I. Then, after alluding to Dr. Ingleby's conjectural emendation, he says, "If Shakespeare had not favoured the enclosure scheme, why should the majority of the Corporation have addressed one of their letters of remonstrance to him as well as to Mainwaring, or why should Greene have troubled the former with 'a note of the inconveniences' that would arise from the execution of the proposed design?" So, too, Mr. Lee: "The entry therefore implies that Shakespeare told J. Greene that the writer of the diary, Thomas Greene, was not able to bear the enclosure. Those who represent Shakespeare as a champion of popular rights have to read the 'I' in 'I was not able,' as 'he.' Were that the correct reading, Shakespeare would be rightly credited with telling J. Greene that he disliked the enclosure; but palæographers only recognise the reading 'I.'" (p. 218n).

That this entry in Thomas Greene's diary should now be given to the world in the amended (*i.e.*, the falsified) form, in order to enlist the sympathy of the reader with Shakspeare of Stratford, as making a "pathetic" struggle during the last months of his life for the rights of the poor and

the beauties of nature, strikes me as one of the most characteristic, as well as one of the most instructive, examples of Stratfordian methods that has, so far, come before my notice. It is a deplorable illustration of the manner in which this unfortunate *idée fixe* may lead to results not distinguishable from those of conscious dishonesty.

### Warwickshire Words and Local Allusions

And now a word as to the special "Warwickshire" dialect which Miss Kingsley finds so plentifully in the language of Shakespeare. Here we can only smile, though here too, we must recognise that there is a "pathetic" element. The lady seems to be under the impression that any peculiar words which are, or were, in use in Warwickshire, must necessarily be peculiar to Warwickshire. Let me illustrate this by one or two examples. Shakespeare in *Venus and Adonis*, speaks of the "many *musets*" through which the hare goes. "Here again," says Miss Kingsley, "Shakespeare uses a local word; for a *muse* or *muset* signifies the opening in a fence through which the hare passes." A *local* word! Is it really suggested that *muse* or *muset* is peculiar to Stratford, or to Warwickshire? Is not Miss Kingsley aware that the word—more often

written *meuse*<sup>1</sup>—is of Pan-Anglican usage? If she will consult Wright's Dialect Dictionary, for instance, she will find that the word is noted as in use in fifteen counties, and "East Anglia," as well as in Warwickshire. Yet it is, forsooth to be pressed into service as indicating the Stratfordian origin of *Venus and Adonis*!

But many examples may be given equally ridiculous. Thus, if Stakespeare speaks of "hedges even-pleached" we are gravely told that "a Warwickshire hedger still pleaches the top of his hedge." No doubt he does, and so does a hedger in Hampshire, and in a dozen other counties to boot.<sup>2</sup> If Shakespeare speaks of "rank fumitory" we learn that "an epithet is used . . . which would be absurd in the southern counties"; for "all through the South of England a more harmless little cornfield weed could not be found; but on the heavy soil of the Midlands it is positively 'rank,' and becomes a formidable field pest." What clearer proof could there be that *Henry V.* and *King Lear* were written by a Warwickshire man? Yet we have very good evidence that "fumitory" was considered

<sup>1</sup> It is the old French *mussette*. "Meuse" is actually cited as a *Sussex* word by Mr. Scott Surtees in his "Shakespeare's Provincialisms" (1889), wherein he claims to have collected "a mass of evidence, perfectly overwhelming as to the writer of the plays being a Sussex man, bred and born"!

<sup>2</sup> "Plash" is another form of the same word; also "plait."

throughout England generally as the worst enemy of the rye and the corn. It is not by any means the "harmless little cornfield-weed" with which Miss Kingsley seeks to identify it. If she will turn to Fitzherbert's *Book of Husbandry* (1523) she will find that it is spoken of as "terre" *i.e.*, tares, and is thus described: "It groweth like vetches but it is much smaller, and it will grow as high as the corn, and with the weight thereof it pulleth the corn flat to the earth and fretteth the ears away." This, be it remarked, is not a *local* description of the weed!

Again, *nild* for *needle* is cited as a word peculiar to "Warwickshire," although it is only necessary to refer to Murray's Dictionary to dispel that illusion. If Shakespeare speaks of tearing *limmel*, if his house-wife uses a *tun-dish*, or *swills* her kitchen, if he speaks of cider as *ropy*, if he *swinges* a pig, if his boys call a hedgehog an *urchin*,<sup>1</sup> if he uses such words as *gallus*, or *gluts*, or *slobbery*, or *sneaping* (with variant *sniping*) we are given to understand that these words, which are, or were, in truth, common over the greater part of England, are "Warwickshire" dialect, and therefore indicative of the Stratfordian origin of the Plays!

But, then, there is our "old friend *Christopher*

<sup>1</sup> "Hedgehog, the Common Urchin of Pennant." *Encyc. Brit.* Miss Kingsley claims "bat-fowling" also as "Warwickshire," but the term was common in Hampshire and elsewhere. See White's *Selborne* Lr. xxvii.



*Sly*," who we are told, "was an actual contemporary of Shakespeare's." Now *Sly*, as we all know, appears in the Induction to *The Taming of the Shrew*, but he does not make his first appearance therein, for a gentleman of the same name appeared, in the same character, in the old play *The Taming of a Shrew*, wherefore the occurrence of the name of *Sly* in the later play can hardly be appealed to as evidence that it must have been written by William Shakspeare of Stratford, unless by those who are prepared to assert that he also wrote the earlier play—an hypothesis which finds little favour with the orthodox, being, in truth, not a little dangerous to the orthodox faith.

Then we have "William Visor of Wincot" once more,<sup>1</sup> and is not Wincot a place somewhere in the neighbourhood of Stratford? It is true that Miss Kingsley does not, like Sir Edward Sullivan, write "Wincot" for "Wincot," but she has a very simple way of getting over the difficulty for she tells us that "Wincot, Wincot, and Wilnecote are all one and the same place," so that Wincot of the folios, and Wincote of the quarto, is identical with Wincot, and William Visor and Marian Hacket both hail from the same place. This simplifies matters certainly, but I do not

<sup>1</sup> See *Ante*, p. 22.

know that we have anything beyond Miss Kingsley's *ipsa dixit* in favour of the supposed identification. In any case the question still remains, where was this polyonomous place? "Wincot," says Mr. Lee, "was the familiar designation of three small Warwickshire villages, and a good claim has been set up on behalf of each to be the scene of Sly's drunken exploits. There is a very small hamlet named Wincot within four miles of Stratford *now consisting of a single farmhouse*,<sup>1</sup> which was once an Elizabethan mansion; it is situated on what was *doubtless* in Shakespeare's day, before the land there was enclosed, an open heath." This, as Mr. George Hookham observes, "is probably quite the smallest hamlet ever seen or heard of."<sup>2</sup> The dictionaries tell us that a "hamlet" is "a little cluster of houses in the country," but here we have a unique specimen "consisting of a single farmhouse." But unique as it is its claim to immortality in connection with Sly and Marion Hacket or William Visor ("of Wincot") is by no means undisputed, for, says Mr. Lee, "by

<sup>1</sup> My italics.

<sup>2</sup> "The Shakespearean Problem," *National Review*, January, 1909. "It is extremely unlikely," writes Halliwell Phillipps (vol. 2, p. 307, sixth edition), "that here was to be found an ale-house of any kind, and there appears to be nothing beyond the mere name to warrant recent conjectures of this being the hamlet mentioned by Shakespeare."

Warwickshire contemporaries the Wincot of the *Taming of the Shrew* was unhesitatingly identified with Wilnecote, near Tamworth, on the Staffordshire border of Warwickshire, at some distance from Stratford. That village, whose name was pronounced 'Wincot,' was celebrated for its ale in the seventeenth century, a distinction which is not shown by contemporary evidence to have belonged to any place of like name." But, as Mr. George Hookham writes, "Tamworth is on the extreme edge of Shakspeare's 'native county,' being, if one may judge from the map, partly in Staffordshire, and some thirty-three miles, as the crow flies, distant from Stratford." Precious little here to show *local* influences, or to reinforce the argument for the Stratfordian authorship! Yet it is to *this* Wincot (*viz.*, the "Tamworth" Wilnecote) that Sir Aston Cokain, more than forty years after Shakspeare's death, admittedly alludes in the lines quoted by Miss Kingsley. And there is yet a third "Wincot," namely Wilmecote, the residence of Robert Arden, Shakspeare's maternal grandfather. Miss Kingsley may, therefore, "go one better" and say, "Wincot, Woncot, Wilmcote, Wilnecote and Wilmecote are all one and the same place," though she should supplement this statement with the addition that this "same place" is situated in different localities.

But what of "Barton-on-the-Heath," Sly's home, which, says Miss Kingsley, lies a few miles south-east of the town of Stratford? Well, the lady quietly ignores the fact that "Barton-on-the-Heath" is not mentioned in the play. Christopher Sly speaks of himself as "old Sly's son of Barton-Heath." What right has she, then, to tell us that "Barton-on-the-Heath" was Sly's home? Just this, that Stratfordian critics, looking out for local references, have hazarded the conjecture that these two also are "one and the same place." And yet, writes Mr. Hookham, "to one who can see other places besides Stratford on a map of England, a place called Barton is not undiscoverable, being moreover one-third the distance of Stratford from the Tamworth Wincot, and a heath country."

To such length are these orthodox commentators prepared to go in their burning desire to find "a local habitation" for Shakespearian nomenclature!

But then have we not the "Forest of Arden," which, as Miss Kingsley tells us, "stretched away for twenty miles north of Stratford?" And does not this Forest of Arden make its appearance in *As You Like It*? Well, the plain truth is that *As You Like It* is founded on Lodge's *Rosalynde*, where we find that the banished King "lived as an

outlaw in the forest of Arden," *i.e.*, the Ardennes. And thus another supposed local allusion is seen to be nothing more than a bubble light as air.

### The Marriage Licence Again

A word more and I have done with Miss Kingsley's article. "We know," said the lady, "that in 1582 the Bishop of Worcester granted a licence for the marriage of William Shakespeare . . . with Anne Hathaway." What we do know, as I have already explained (*Ante* p. 94, *et seq.*), is that on November 27th of that year, a licence was granted for the marriage of "William Shaxpere and Anna Whateley of Temple Grafton," and that on the very next day two illiterate clowns entered into a bond to save the Bishop harmless "for licensing William Shagspere and Anne Hathwey . . . to be married together with once asking of the banns of matrimony." It is possible, therefore, that the Bishop on that same day issued another licence for the marriage of "Shagspere" and Anne Hathwey, although no note can be found of such a licence having been issued. But what became of poor "Anna &c. de Temple Grafton?" The two bondsmen above alluded to were, it seems, friends of Anne Hathwey's father, who had lately died. Did Shakspeare contemplate matrimony with

another lady, and did Anne's father's friends interfere at the last moment, and insist that he should make Anne "an honest woman"? Or is "Shaxpere" of the licence a different person from "Shagspere" of the bond? That seems to be very improbable. Or is "Anne Whateley de Temple Grafton" merely a scribe's careless error? That seems to be more unlikely still.

### "Non Tali Auxilio"

So much then for this typical "orthodox" essay. It has proved, I think, well worthy of consideration, for it furnishes us with an illuminating example of the manner in which the Stratfordian Mythology has been built up, and is still continually being added to. Miss Kingsley writes not as a critic, but as a votaress at the Stratfordian shrine. But I venture to say that the day has gone by for sentimental or uncritical effusions of this sort. Mr. Thomas Seccombe, in a notice of my book, *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, published in *The Daily News* of September, 23rd, 1908, has frankly expressed his opinion—and coming from such a well-known writer and scholar it is one which will carry weight—that "we require a new Life of Shakespeare, differing in certain important respects from the vulgate that now finds its way into our literary histories."

And as to the orthodox "biographers," he says, "their results neither tally among themselves, nor do they explain 'the problem' by making the Works of Shakespeare correspond adequately, or, indeed, in any way satisfactorily, with his life." "Let them to it again!" he adds; "and let the biographers begin by confuting Mr. Greenwood. I cannot." But this lady not only repeats all the old stories in a spirit of unquestioning faith; not only accepts "the vulgate" as though it were an inspired gospel; but actually embellishes it with apocryphal additions of her own, regardless, or oblivious, of all evidence to the contrary; such, for example, as the tale of William of Stratford, the Village Hampden, the protector of common rights, the champion of the poor, the preserver of the beauties and amenities of nature! "*Non tali auxilio*"! I think this will be the sighing comment of the better-informed advocates of the traditional authorship as they read these obsolete fairy-tales. For what is wanted at this time of day, in the wide field of Shakespearean commentary, is not the musings of the sentimentalist, but the honest labour and research of a well-qualified and impartial critic, working with the single-minded object of discovering and elucidating the truth—"the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

### PART III.

#### DR. WALLACE'S "NEW SHAKESPEARE DISCOVERIES."

The following appeared in *The National Review* for April, 1910, and is now republished with the kind permission of the Editor.

**I**N *Harper's Magazine* for March, 1910 there has been published an article by Dr. Charles William Wallace, Professor in the University of Nebraska, under the title "New Shakespeare Discoveries. Shakespeare as a Man among Men"; and purporting to give "the first complete and exclusive account of the finding of hitherto unknown documents which constitute the most important addition to our knowledge of Shakespeare's life which has been made in the past one hundred and fifty years." Dr. Wallace's "Shakespeare Discoveries" have been heralded by loud and continuous flourishes of trumpets; in fact, they have been "boomed" in true Transatlantic style. It was, therefore, with feverish interest that I turned to this article, promising, as it does, to give new information concerning Shakespeare's life of such vast importance. Here, surely, I



thought, we shall at last find proof positive of the identity of the author of *Hamlet* with William Shakspeare of Stratford, gent. and play-actor !

Well, I have read the Professor's article, and re-read it, and given it full consideration, and having done so, I can only exclaim in the words of the French critic, " Tant de bruit pour une omelette au lard ! "

Let us see exactly how much it comes to, this " most important addition to our knowledge of Shakespeare's life which has been made in the past one hundred and fifty years," and what does it show us of " Shakespeare as a man among men " ?

Professor Wallace has taken the very meritorious, though at the same time the very laborious, course of ransacking certain unexplored documents at the Record Office, and in so doing he has certainly earned our gratitude. Here, he tells us, he found, among the documents of the ancient " Court of Requests " records of a certain action brought by one Stephen Bellott against Christopher Monjoy, or Mountjoy. This Mountjoy was, according to Dr. Wallace, a Frenchman—and " possibly " a Huguenot, but of that there is no evidence—who " took out his patent of denization in London, May 27th, 1607." He was, it appears, a " tire-maker," which at that time meant that he was the maker of " head-dresses and wigs."

He lived, we are told, in a corner house at the meeting of Silver Street and Muggle or Mugwell (now Monkwell) Street, and in the Cripplegate Ward. This Mountjoy takes one Stephen Bellott "as apprentice to learn the trade of tire-making," and Bellott boards in Mountjoy's house aforesaid. Mountjoy has an only daughter, called Mary, and when Stephen had finished his apprenticeship and proved himself a competent maker of head-dresses, it appears to have occurred to Mary's parents that it would be a desirable thing to arrange a match between him and their daughter Mary, who also had become proficient as a "tire-maker." Stephen however, goes away to Spain, but "near the close of 1604 . . . returned to the house and shop that had been home to him for six years." Now was the time to bring matters to a head. But Stephen seems to have been a bashful wooer, or, perhaps, his intentions, though, doubtless, strictly honourable, were not matrimonial. Mrs. Mountjoy, therefore, seems to have resolved upon an active plan of campaign. And now William Shakspeare comes upon the scene. He, it appears, was at that time lodging with tire-maker Mountjoy, so Mrs. Mountjoy conceives the happy idea of making him an intermediary. She entreats him to approach this young man, so sadly wanting in initiative, and give him a broad hint that "Barkis

[i.e., Mary] is willing." The result shall be told in Dr. Wallace's beautiful and picturesque language:—"So the greatest poet of all the world, moved by the simple impulse of humanity that is the key to all he ever wrote, did the wished-for service among these simple-hearted, single-passioned folk." To Stephen then, goes William Shakspeare, and, doubtless, tells him that if he can "screw his courage to the sticking-point," Mary is ready to be his, with her parents' blessing, and a dower of £50—say £400 in money of to-day. "Accost, Sir Toby, accost," says Shakspeare to Stephen, and so well did he plead that, inspired by this persuasive matchmaker, the bashful young man is, in modern language, "brought up to the scratch," and "the marriage was solemnised, as the parish register of St. Olave, Silver Street, shows, November 19, 1604."

So the worthy tire-maker and his wife obtained their heart's desire, and Mary Mountjoy becomes Mrs. Stephen Bellott. But, alas, they had soon reason to repent that they had employed "the greatest poet of all the world," as honest broker in this little matrimonial scheme. "Just what happened," says Dr. Wallace, "is not told"; but it is clear that there were "ructions."<sup>1</sup> "It

<sup>1</sup> Let not the reader suppose that this vulgar word is Dr. Wallace's.

had been agreed that dear Stephen and Mary were to live in the paternal home," in Muggle Street. "But before the end of the first year Bellott refused to remain longer." He removes with his wife to the parish of St. Sepulchre's, where they have "a chamber in the house or inn" of one George Wilkins, described as a "victualer." A year and a half later, in October, 1606, Mrs. Mountjoy dies, and "the young people then return to live with the father as partners in the business of tyre-making [*sic*]. But a half-year was as long as they remained. Father and son-in-law could not agree." "Bellott claims he was to have a dower of sixty pounds, and, besides, at the death of the father, he was to receive a legacy of £200, equal to about £1,600 in money of to-day. He declares the father has never yet paid the dower, and, besides, since his mother's death, has become reckless and wasteful in spending his money, and has declared he will leave Bellott and his wife not a groat when he dies." Mountjoy denies all this, and brings counterclaims, so Bellott hales his father-in-law before the Court of Requests in the hope of compelling the old man to fulfil his alleged promises. The hearing of the cause, we are told, was set down for Easter term, 1612, and on May 7th, "the Court issued 'a compulsory to William Shakespeare, gent. and

others, ad testificandum inter Stephen Bellott, querentem et Christoferum Mountjoy deft.' " Interrogatories also were issued to these witnesses, which are set forth at length in Dr. Wallace's article, and which make inquiry *inter alia*, as to what sum or sums of money the defendant promised to give the complainant " for a porcon in marriage," and what further sum was promised by the defendant at his decease, and what parcels of goods, or household stuff, the defendant promised to give unto the complainant on his marriage, and what he in fact did give, it being suggested that he only gave " one ould ffether bed, one ould ffether boulster, a flocke boulster, a thine greene rugg, two ordinarie blanckettes woven, two paire sheetes, a dozen napkines of Course Dyaper," and other things of but little value. To these interrogatories the several deponents make answer. And first Johane Johnstone, who was " servant to the defendant at that time," declares, amongst other things, that " as she remembereth the defendant did send and perswade *one Mr. Shakespeare* that laye in the house to perswade the plaintiff to the same marriadge," and thereunto she subscribes " her mark." This is the only evidence that " Mr. Shakespeare " lodged with Mountjoy, for he himself, in his answer, does not mention the fact,

which is rather remarkable, since it was obviously a very important one in the circumstances of the case. However, we may be content to assume that William Shakspeare had found a lodging with the "tire-maker" in Muggle Street. It is just the sort of thing that we should expect. Dr. Wallace concludes that "Shakespeare lived at Mountjoy's during all the time of Bellott's apprenticeship, that is, six years, from 1598 to 1604," and so the fact may have been, though it hardly appears, as the Professor suggests, "upon his own testimony."

Then one "Danyell Nycholas of the parishe of St. Olphadge within Cripplegate London, gent." says that "he herd *one Wm. Shakespeare* saye that the defendant did beare A good opinion of the plaintiff and affected him well when he served him And did move the plaintiff by him the said Shakespeare to have a marriadge betweene his daughter Marye Mountioye, and the plaintiff. And for that purpose sent him the said Shakespeare to the plaintiff to perswade the plaintiff to the same, as Shakespeare tould him this deponent" etc., etc., and in a subsequent answer, the same Daniel Nycholas says that "Mr. William Shakespeare tould him this deponent that the defendant sent him the said Mr. Shakespeare to the plaintiff about suche A Marriadge to be hadd between

them. And Shakespeare tould this deponent that the defendant tould him that yf the plaintiff would Marrye the said Marye his daughter he would give him the plaintiff A some of money with her for A porcion in Marriadge with her "; thus lapsing into hear-say evidence of a character such as might send a modern lawyer into fits.<sup>1</sup> Then comes the great man himself, viz. " William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Aven in the Countye of Warwicke gent of the age of xlviiii. yeres or thereabouts," who deposes, *inter alia* that " the said deffendantes wyeffe did sollicit and entreat this deponent to move and perswade the said Complainant to effect the said Marriadge and accordingly the deponent did move and perswade the Complainant thereunto." This answer is, according to Dr. Wallace, signed " Wilm Shaks," concerning which more anon.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, we have an answer from one William Eaton, concerning whom Dr. Wallace says, " Even young William Eaton, an apprentice now to Bellott, had the privilege of knowing Shakespeare and has heard him and Bellott talk over the question of dower, probably in the shop."

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Wallace suggests that another witness, Eaton, was checked in a statement which he was about to make because " he was not allowed to go on with hearsay evidence." In view of the above it seems very improbable that *that* was the reason.

<sup>2</sup> And see at p. 208.

And "Young William Eaton," the apprentice, says, "he hath herd *one Mr. Shakespeare* saye that he was sent by the defendant to the plaintiff to move the plaintiff to have a marriadge between them, the plaintiff and the defendante's daughter, Marye Mountioye."

It is to be noticed that all these witnesses speak of "one Wm. Shakespeare," or "one, Mr. Shakespeare," and never describe him, or allude to him as a poet, or playwright, although at this date, 1612, "Shakespeare" was at the zenith of his fame, so far as he had contemporary fame at all. This is distinctly irritating, but 'tis always thus.

Lastly comes the answer of "George Wilkins, of the parish of St. Sepulcre's, victualer, of the age of thirty-six,"<sup>1</sup> who "testifies that Bellott and his wife, after leaving their father's in 1605, 'came to dwell in this deponents house in one of his Chambers. And brought with them A fewee goodes or household stuffs which by Reporte the defendant her father gave them, ffor wch this deponent would not have geven above ffyve poundes yf he had bene to have bought the same.'"

It is a pity that only this short extract should have been given from George Wilkins's answer.

<sup>1</sup> Was it customary for the age of deponents to be recorded on their answers to interrogatories in those times, except when relevant to the question at issue?



One would have liked to see it *in extenso*. For up to this point there is certainly no evidence whatsoever to identify "one Wm. Shakespeare" with the writer of *Hamlet*; but Dr. Wallace appears to think that there is proof to that effect to be found in the fact that George Wilkins appears on the scene in this connection. Let us see how this is done. The process is a very simple one. There was a pamphleteer and hack-writer named George Wilkins, as to whose life little or nothing is known. Nobody seems to have discovered the date of his birth or of his death. His earliest work is said to have been called *Three Miseries of Barbary, Plague, Famine, Civile Warre*, and this was published without date. In July 1607, however, he published a play called *The Miseries of Inforst Marriage*, which had some success, and in 1608 he brought out a novel founded on the story of *Pericles*, "being the true history of the play, as it was lately presented by the worthy and ancient poet, John Gower." It is generally supposed, but by no means certain, that he wrote a portion of the play, which was first published in quarto form in 1609, as by "William Shakespeare," but which was omitted by the editors both of the First and of the Second Folios. It has also been conjectured that he had a share in *Timon of Athens*, but this is an

hypothesis which depends solely on considerations of style and metre. Where he lived is not known. There was a George Wilkins who died at Holywell Street, Shoreditch, in August 1603, and who is described in the burial register of St. Leonard, Shoreditch, as "George Wilkins the Poet." This may possibly have been the father of the pamphleteer and hack-writer. In Ward's *History of Dramatic Literature* we read (vol. ii. 607) "Among the dramatists in Henslowe's pay were also Richard Hathway. . . Wentworth Smith . . . and George Wilkins." I do not remember, however, that Henslowe makes mention of Wilkins in his diary; at any rate there is no reference to him in the index to Mr. Greg's excellent edition, although there are frequent references to the two other dramatists above-mentioned. Now Dr. Wallace at once assumes, as if it were a matter upon which there can be no possible doubt, that "George Wilkins, of the parish of St. Sepulchres, victualer, of the age of thirty-six", who puts in an answer to Interrogatories in the case of "Bellott v. Mountjoy," whereof only a very short extract is vouchsafed to us, is identical with George Wilkins, the hack dramatist. This has become known to him not so much by his "illative" as by his olfactory sense. "We have known nothing about Wilkins person-

ally before," he writes, " but I think that more than one reader with a livelier critical interest in these plays may be able to *smell the victualler*, not only in the expression and dramaturgy, but also in the choice of theme." The conclusion follows naturally, and it is, of course, fatal to the hypothesis that some one, not Shakspeare of Stratford (and *not* " of the same name " !), published plays and poems under the pen-name of " Shakespeare " or " Shake-speare." For if this were so, says Dr. Wallace, " it would be difficult to explain how he [Shakspeare to wit] and Wilkins were both interested in this suit on behalf of young Bellott, and how the same he and Wilkins also wrote two plays together " !

One could scarcely find a finer example than this of what is conceived to be " evidence " (save the mark !) by those who are strongly possessed of the Stratfordian *idée fixe*. Dr. Wallace's reasoning is founded on the shifting sands of three unproved hypotheses, and even though all these should be admitted, for the sake of argument, his conclusion fails to follow.

The first unproved hypothesis is that George Wilkins " victualer " is George Wilkins the hack-dramatist.

The second hypothesis is that George Wilkins the hack-dramatist collaborated with Shakespeare.

The third hypothesis (which involves the assumption of the truth of the second) is that the Shakespeare with whom Wilkins collaborated was Shakspeare the Stratford player, and not some writer who published under the *nom de plume* of "Shakespeare."

But even assuming that of which there is really no proof whatever, viz., that "Wilkins, victualler" = "Wilkins, dramatist," I fail to see how any difficulty arises for those who have found themselves unable to believe that Shakspeare the "Stratford rustic," as Dr. Garnett styled him, developed into Shakespeare the author of *Hamlet*. The very commonplace and by no means edifying story revealed by the case of "Bellott v. Mountjoy" is just what we should have expected to find in connection with Shakspeare the player. He appears as "one William Shakespeare," lodging with a "tire-maker" in Muggle Street, just as we should expect to find him. That he, the actor, was acquainted with Wilkins the hack-writer and dramatist is probable enough, nay it is certain, if it be true, as stated by Mr. Lee, that Wilkins was "associated as a playwright with the King's Company of players of which Shakespeare [*i.e.* Shakspeare] was a member, revising old plays and collaborating new ones," a statement, however, which seems to depend rather on conjecture than

on evidence. Granted then, for the sake of argument only, that the "victualer" and the hack-writer are one, all that Dr. Wallace has shown is that the young Bellotts removed from the house where Shakspeare was lodging to a "house or inn" kept by the hack-writer! Yet on this slender thread he makes bold to hang the following portentous statement: "The evidence at hand makes it certain at least that here at the corner of Muggell and Silver Streets Shakespeare was living when he wrote some of his greatest plays, *Henry V.*, *Much Ado*, *As you Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *Hamlet*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Macbeth*, *Measure for Measure*, *Othello*. And it is most likely that he wrote his subsequent plays here"!

Of a truth it is not only "Baconians" who can be accused of making wild assertions!

And now a word as to Shakspeare's newly discovered signature, of which a facsimile is given us by Dr. Wallace. To the ordinary beholder it is a wondrous hieroglyphic. To the "paleographer" it is a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. As read by Dr. Wallace it stands "Willm Shaks." Canon Beeching has said that the three signatures to Shakspeare's will "are beyond criticism by any humane person," because they "were written . . . a month before his

death."<sup>1</sup> Whatever we may think of that argument (and in my humble opinion it descends to the nadir of absurdity) it certainly has no relevance to a signature written in the year 1612. If "the rapid abbreviated signature," as Dr. Wallace calls it, is in fact an uncouth scrawl—and I would ask the reader particularly to observe the lines that are supposed to represent "a" and "k"—the cause in this case can hardly be found in the bad health of the signatory, the man who, on the orthodox hypothesis, was at that time engaged in writing some of the finest works in the whole range of literature.

But Professor Wallace will not have it that there is anything at all to cavil at in this signature. According to him "Willm Shaks." is a work of art, and the truth is that Shakspeare wrote a hand "clearer, and more legible than that of the average modern university graduate." Alas, for the modern university graduate! But let us hear Dr. Wallace further on this subject.

"It is said by Shakespeare's enemies that he was an ignoramus who could not write his name legibly. The fault, however, lies not in him, but in themselves. Familiarity with contemporary script would reverse the conclusion."

<sup>1</sup> The will, by the way, recites that the testator was "in perfect health."

By "Shakespeare's enemies" Dr. Wallace means, of course, those lovers of Shakespeare who are convinced, on what appears to them to be sufficient grounds, that the works which they so greatly admire were not written by the Stratford actor; just as Sir Edward Sullivan finds a characteristic pleasure in applying the term "Defamers of Shakespeare" to a class of Shakespeare's most enthusiastic admirers. This sort of thing pleases minds of a certain type, and as it amuses them and does not hurt us, we need not waste our time over it. Speaking for myself, however, I may say that I have never said or thought that Shakspeare was "an ignoramus." I think it highly probable that he attended the Grammar School at Stratford for four or five years, and that later in life, after some years in London, he was probably able to "bumbast out a line," and perhaps to pose as "Poet-Ape who would be thought our chief." Nay, I am not at all sure that he would not have been capable of collaborating with such a man as George Wilkins, and perhaps, of writing quite as well as he, if not even better. But it does not follow from this that he was the author either of *Venus and Adonis* or of *Hamlet*!

But let us return to the signature. Shakspeare wrote, as we know, in the Gothic, or old German,

script, which, says Dr. Wallace, "like the northern character that expresses itself in rough, unrounded corners, tall, aspiring steeples, and sharp initiative, is highly angular." Now nobody with any knowledge of the writing of Elizabethan times would deny that it was quite usual for well-educated men to employ that script in those days. The question seems rather to be whether Shakspeare, if it is fair to judge from the few specimens of his handwriting that have come down to us, was anything but a very poor writer in that script—whether he did not somewhat accentuate the "tall aspiring steeples, and rough, unrounded corners!" It certainly does not follow that a man was uneducated because he wrote the Gothic script in "the spacious times"; but, on the other hand, it as certainly does not follow that he was not a very bad writer because he happened to write that particular script! Were all the plays really written in this hand? Was this the style of the "unblotted manuscripts?" It is certainly very difficult to believe it—except, perhaps, for the "paleographer."

As for the idea that Shakspeare could not, or, at least, did not, write "legibly," it is by no means confined to the unorthodox. For what says Mr. Lee, of whom it cannot be said that he is in-



experienced in Elizabethan handwriting? Referring to the copyist of the great dramatist's supposed manuscript, Mr. Lee writes, in his Introduction to the Folio facsimile, that he "was not always happy in deciphering his original, especially when the dramatist wrote so illegibly as Shakespeare"! <sup>1</sup>

Who shall decide when doctors disagree,  
And casuists doubt, like Wallace and like Lee?

It really seems that "familiarity with contemporary script" does not always lead the critic to "reverse the conclusion!" Nay, I can refer Dr. Wallace to one of his own countrymen, no other than Dr. Mellen Chamberlain, once a recognised authority, I believe, as a "paleographer," and for some time Librarian of the Boston (U.S.A.) public library, who wrote, concerning an alleged "Shakespeare" signature, that "the field of comparison . . . is narrow, being limited to those written between 1613 and 1616, all of which show such a lack of facility in handwriting as would almost preclude the possibility of Shakespeare's having written the dramas

<sup>1</sup> Since this appeared in *The National Review* I find the following in a leading article in *The Times Literary Supplement* (April 21st, 1910) on "Seekers after Shakespeare": "We pry into watermarks, and are greatly cheered by a new autograph signature, *illegible, it is true, to all except those few who are familiarly conversant with the apparently paralytic handwriting of the period.*"

attributed to him, so great is the apparent illiteracy of his signatures!"

Well, really, how these great authorities do differ! Then, says Dr. Wallace: "Few men of the time, whether ignorant or educated, habitually used any other style of writing than the Gothic." What says Mr. Lee? "As was customary in provincial schools he [Shakspeare] was taught to write the 'Old English' character, which resembles that still in vogue in Germany. He was never taught the Italian script, which at the time was rapidly winning its way in fashionable cultured society, and is now universal among Englishmen. Until his death Shakespeare's 'Old English' handwriting testified to his provincial education."

Really this is rather bewildering, but I have a shrewd suspicion, almost amounting to entire confidence, that Mr. Lee is quite right in this matter.

Not being a "paleographer" I cannot say what was the proportion of men, in Shakespearean times, who wrote in the "Italian script," as compared with those who wrote the old Gothic hand, but I venture to think that Dr. Wallace is quite wrong when he says that "few men of the time . . . habitually used any other style" than the Gothic. One has only to turn to the

writing of Ben Jonson, and Josua Sylvester, and Spenser, and Sidney, and Francis Bacon, and many others whom one might name, to see a very complete contrast between their cultivated "Italian" style (which they seem to have used "habitually," by the way) and Shakspeare's negligent "Gothic" scrawl—a comparison very much indeed to Shakspeare's disadvantage, though it would be, of course, in the highest degree unreasonable to expect him, with his "provincial" bringing up, to write in the style which was "rapidly winning its way in fashionable cultured society."

But Dr. Wallace founds yet another truly remarkable argument upon this newly discovered so-called "Shakespeare" signature. In the Bodleian Library there is a copy of the Aldine edition of Ovid's "Metamorphoses" (1502), and on the title is the signature "W<sup>m</sup>. Sh<sup>e</sup>," which, says Mr. Lee, "experts have declared—not quite conclusively,—to be a genuine autograph of the poet." How the "experts" could undertake to say this, unless guided by divine inspiration, it is difficult to guess, for obviously an "expert" forger would have had little difficulty in writing "W<sup>m</sup>. Sh<sup>e</sup>." in such a way as to deceive the very elect, especially as the strong inclination of all the faithful would be to believe in its authenticity.

However, one knows what "expert" evidence is, and I think very few modern critics have ventured to pin their faith on the Bodleian so-called "signature," and even when the portentous word "paleographers," so dear to Dr. Wallace, is substituted for "experts"—"all paleographers who have examined it declare it genuine," he says—the sceptical may well remain unconvinced. According to Dr. Wallace, however, the case is now established. Listen to his argument. "The only difficulty that remained was the fact that no known authentic signature by Shakespeare [Shakspeare by the way never signed his name "Shakespeare"] was abbreviated. The present documents furnish one. *This added to previous evidence, makes the proof of genuineness conclusive. Shakespeare undoubtedly used this well-worn copy of the Metamorphoses and wrote his name in it . . . some time near the close of his life.*"

This is, indeed, a magnificent example of the "Stratfordian" ratiocination, and furnishes us with an illuminating illustration of what an "orthodox" Professor considers to be evidence. There is a book with "W<sup>m</sup> Sh<sup>e</sup>." inscribed in it, nobody knows when or by whom. This very abbreviated signature might have been written by Shakespeare, or it might have been written by someone else. But no other abbreviated

signature by "Shakespeare" could be produced. At length one is discovered written "Willm Shaks." *Eureka!* cries Professor Wallace; the matter is settled. "Willm Shaks" is "*conclusive*" evidence in favour of "W<sup>m</sup>. Sh<sup>e</sup>." How could it be possible for a forger to have written "W<sup>m</sup>. Sh<sup>e</sup>." seeing that Shakspeare, on one occasion at least, wrote "Willm Shaks"? I really think that if my old friend Judge Pitt-Taylor had been alive he would have found himself constrained to bring out a new edition of his *Law of Evidence!*

Dr. Wallace then proceeds to inform us that "in 1838 a copy of John Florio's translation of *Montaigne's Essays* (1603) was purchased by the British Museum for £120 at auction merely on the conviction of Sir Frederick Madden and others that the name 'William Shakespeare' on the fly-leaf was a genuine signature. But it is still an open question."

So this learned Shakespearean scholar appears to think that the British Museum signature in "Florio's *Montaigne*" is "William Shakespeare"! He is not aware, apparently, that it is "Willm. Shakspeare"! Probably also he is not aware that Sir Edward Maunde Thompson, who is certainly an "expert," and, perhaps, a "paleographer" too, has pronounced it an undoubted

forgery! Yet I think the Professor might have been expected to make himself acquainted with these elementary facts.

One crowning absurdity still remains to be mentioned. Shakspeare, it seems, lodged with Mountjoy. He "laye in the house," says Mrs. Johane Johnson. Dr. Wallace finds great significance in this. Why did Shakspeare choose to reside with a foreign family? "Read *Henry V.* again and you will understand the reason." Shakspeare evidently took up his residence with the Mountjoys for the purpose of "exchanging lessons in French and English, which serve as prototypes for the charming efforts of Katherine and Alice and Henry!"<sup>1</sup> Upon this subject Dr. Wallace waxes eloquent and becomes picturesque. And what resulted from all this? Why Shakspeare "honours his host by raising him in the play (*Henry V.*) to the dignity of a French Herald under his own name of Mountjoy." What clearer proof could be required that William Shakspeare of Stratford was the author of *Henry V.*? Where else could he have found the name of Mountjoy? It seems cruel to interpose with the prosaic suggestion that Shakespeare borrowed largely from Holinshed, and took

<sup>1</sup> I should have thought the "efforts" of Katherine and Alice (Act iii. 4) could hardly be described as "charming"! But *quot homines tot sententiæ*.

Mountjoy, the French Herald, direct from that well-known source. Yet so, alas! the fact is. "Solventur risu tabulae."<sup>1</sup>

And what is the conclusion of the whole matter? What does this new discovery show? It shows us Shakspeare of Stratford in exactly such circumstances as we should have expected to find him in, a bourgeois among bourgeois; lodging with "tire-maker" Mountjoy, and doing a little "brokage" in the marriage market. But what is there to suggest the great poet and dramatist, now at the zenith of his fame, not unknown to Courts, and familiar with all the great ones in the land? Not one single word.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Moreover "Mountjoy" is not a personal name, but the official title of a French Herald, so that the blunder is really inexcusable.

<sup>2</sup> The following delicious and characteristic note of criticism appeared in *The Times Literary Supplement* (April 21st, 1910) from the pen of Canon Beeching:—

"The discovery made by Professor Wallace, of Nebraska, which you lately announced, that Shakespeare resided from 1598 to 1604 at the house of a wig-maker in London throws light on a peculiarity in the dramatist, which has often been remarked upon—namely, his antipathy to false hair. It comes out strongly in Bassanio's speech before the Caskets; in a speech of Biron's in Act iv., scene 3, of *Love's Labour's Lost*; and in the sixty-eighth Sonnet. Now the probable date of *The Merchant of Venice* and of the bulk of the Sonnets is 1597; and in that same year *Love's Labour's Lost* was revised. It looks, therefore, as if 1597 were the year in which Shakespeare took up his abode with the wig-maker and saw into his mystery. The point is interesting in itself; and it goes some distance towards meeting Mr. George Green-

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wood's objection in the current *National Review* that the new discoveries concern only the actor of Stratford-on-Avon and not the writer of the plays. It fits in with the orthodox opinion that they were the same person."

Now in the first place it is to be observed that Dr. Wallace's theory is that Shakspeare lived with the wig-maker from 1598 to 1604. Canon Beeching, however, would fain take an earlier date for the commencement of the player's residence in "Muggle Street," because he would have us believe that immediately Shakspeare took up his lodging with a "tire-maker," he conceived "his antipathy to false hair." But really the Canon ought to place the Muggle Street residence at least a year earlier still, for the better opinion is that *The Merchant of Venice* was written in 1596. As to *Love's Labour's Lost* it was probably written in 1590-91. But then, of course, it was revised at some later date, and, possibly, in the earlier version Biron said nothing about "usurping hair." That was an addition after Shakspeare had seen into the "mystery" at Mountjoy's! As to the sixty-eighth Sonnet, well, we know that Meres talks of the Sonnets as existing in 1598, but, of course, it is possible that this particular sonnet was not written till 1597, though he would, indeed, be a bold man that would undertake to say so. But, in all seriousness, is not this suggestion that his residence with a "tire-maker" was the cause of that dislike of false hair which Shakespeare entertained in common with many other mortals, before, at, and since his time, just a little absurd? Shakespeare, I imagine, was familiar with Ovid's lines (*Amor*: i. 14).

"Nunc tibi captivos mittet Germania crines;  
Culta triumphatae munere gentis eris,"

and, possibly, had read Juvenal's:

"tot adhuc compagibus altum  
Aedificat caput (Sat. vi. 503).

In any case it was not a singular thing that he should dislike this practice of wearing false locks, perhaps "the golden tresses of the dead," nor was it by any means peculiar to him among his contemporaries. The wearing of these "transformations," as I believe, they are now called, had assumed extravagant proportions. Thus we are told of Queen Elizabeth that at one period



she "was possessed of no fewer than eighty attires of false hair,"<sup>1</sup> and Mary Queen of Scots was equally profuse in her indulgence in these artificial adornments. It is hardly necessary, I think, to suppose that Shakespeare lodged with a wig-maker in order to account for his very natural comments upon women who thus decked themselves with false locks,

"often known  
 "To be the dowry of a second head,  
 The skull that bred them in the sepulchre."

I would here add a word as to Shakspeare's handwriting. Mr. Lee, as we have seen, tells us that "he was never taught the Italian script, which at the time was rapidly winning its way in fashionable cultured society." Yet "Shakespeare" could make Malvolio say, with reference to Olivia's supposed letter; "I think we do know the sweet Roman hand"! Is it credible that *he* did not know it? He certainly understood the advantage of writing well. For what says Hamlet?

"I sat me down;  
 Devised a new commission; wrote it fair:  
 I once did hold it, as our statists do,  
 A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much  
 How to forget that learning; but, sir, now  
 It did me yeoman's service." (Act v. ii. 31).

These, surely, are "winged words for the wise."

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

## NOTE.

### THE NAME "SHAKESPEARE."

ON March 12th, 1910, *The Westminster Gazette* published an article from the pen of Dr. Wallace, under the heading of "Shakespeare's signature." One statement in that article seemed to invite comment, and I, therefore, sent a short letter in reply, which appeared in *The Gazette* of March 14th, and is as follows :—

#### "SHAKESPEARE'S SIGNATURE."

*To the* EDITOR *of* THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE,

SIR,—As a humble student and admirer of Shakespeare, I have read with much interest Dr. Wallace's article under the above title in your issue of to-day. Unfortunately, I find in it yet another instance of the contradictory utterances of recognised "authorities" which are encountered by the bewildered student at every turn of Shakespearian criticism and controversy. "By comparing Shakespeare's six signatures," says Dr. Wallace, "it will be seen that he spelled his name out in full in only those three subscriptions written in the solemn and deliberate hour of perfecting his will. The name on the first sheet of the will reads 'Shakspere,' on the second the same, and on the third 'Shakspeare.'" Now, Malone, "the eminent Shakespearian scholar," as Dr. Wallace justly calls him, who examined the signatures with the greatest possible care, and who had the advantage of inspecting them when the ink was fresher by nearly 120 years than it

is now, came to the conclusion that in the signatures to the will, "certainly the letter *a* is not to be found in the second syllable." Sir F. Madden, Dr. Ingleby, and Dr. Furnivall all tell us that the man himself wrote his name "Shakspere." Mr. Spedding says that he never, "in any known case," wrote it "Shakespeare." Mr. Lee writes "The ink of the first signature which Shakespeare appended to his will has now faded almost beyond recognition, but that it was 'Shakspere' may be inferred from the facsimile made by George Steevens, in 1776. The second and third signatures to the will, which are easier to decipher, have been variously read as 'Shakspere,' 'Shakspeare,' and 'Shakespeare'—truly a generous latitude of choice! "But," adds Mr. Lee, "a close examination suggests that, whatever the second signature may be, the third . . . is 'Shakspeare.'" Canon Beeching, in the "Reply" which he did me the honour to publish to my book, *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, using a characteristic adverb, writes (p. 6, note): "On the will the *final* signature is *unmistakably* 'speare,'" and he adds: "I have Dr. E. J. L. Scott's authority for saying that the *second* also has the *a*." So that here we have Dr. Wallace, who is nothing if not a "paleographer" (see his article in *Harper's Magazine* for this month), brought into direct conflict with Dr. E. J. L. Scott, and we may well cry in despair:

Who shall decide when doctors disagree,

And shrewdest casuists doubt—like Scott and Lee?

To me the safer course seems to be to trust to George Steevens (1776), and to Malone's extremely careful examination, made more than a hundred years ago, when the ink was less faded than it now is, supported as he is by Sir Frederick Madden and the other high authorities whom I have mentioned. Moreover, I believe Mr. Halliwell

Phillipps is right in reading the signatures to the deeds of March 10th and 11th, 1612-13, as "Shakspere."<sup>1</sup> But it must be confessed that this conflict of opinion, though quite usual, is not a little bewildering. "*Experto crede*" is good advice, provided it be not rendered "Trust to an expert."—

Yours, etc.,

House of Commons,

G. G. GREENWOOD.

March 12th.

I think a few words may be profitably added on this subject about which there has been so much dispute. In the reply which I published to Canon Beeching's criticism of my book, *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, I showed that the balance of authority is very greatly, if not, indeed, overwhelmingly, on the side of those who read the signatures as "Shakspere" (see *In re Shakespeare, Beeching v. Greenwood, Rejoinder on Behalf of The Defendant*, p. 9, et seq.). Malone's opinion may be found in Boswell's edition (1821) Vol. II., p. 1, note. He adds: "With respect to the last syllable of his name the people of Stratford appear to have generally written the name *Shakspere* or *Shackspere* . . . In some of the writings of the borough I have found the name written at length, *Shaksper*, which was probably the vulgar pronunciation." Mr. Joseph Hunter, in his *New Illustrations of Shakespeare* (Vol. i., p. 9), tells us that the "earliest will of any person of the name which is now to be found at the Register Office at Worcester is of the year 1539. The testator is *Thomas Shakspere*." This will was proved at Stratford-on-Avon.

In 1864, Messrs. Sampson, Low and Marston published a photographic reproduction of "Shakespeare's Will," taken by special permission of the Judge of the Court of

<sup>1</sup> These, being purchase-deed and mortgage of the house in Blackfriars, were, doubtless, signed at the same time, according to the usual practice.

Probate and Divorce, with descriptive letterpress by J. Hain Friswell. I have a copy of this document, which was very kindly sent to me by Mr. F. J. Rymer, one of the Directors of Messrs. Sampson, Low, Marston and Co., to whom my thanks are due. The descriptive letterpress tells us that it "is not a copy, but an absolute reflection of the original document . . . a reproduction so perfect that in it neither the acutest lawyer nor the best microscopist could discover the slightest difference." This being so, I may claim to have before me a reproduction of Shakspeare's Will, exactly as it appeared forty-six years ago. Now, I am no "paleographer," and therefore, it is, I suppose, that I am entirely unable to make anything but "Shakspeare" out of the last signature. To say, as Canon Beeching does, that "the final signature is *unmistakably* 'speare'" is an instructive example of the manner in which some controversialists think to support an untenable statement by the use of an emphatic adverb. As to the first signature, even the "paleographer" cannot read it at the present date, however much he may profess to do so; but, as Mr. Lee honestly admits, the facsimile made by George Steevens, one hundred and thirty-four years ago, shows that it was "Shakspeare," and, really, after making all allowances for the fluidity of spelling in the seventeenth century, I imagine the probability is that Shakspeare would not vary the form of his signature, "written," as Dr. Wallace says, "in the solemn and deliberate hour of perfecting his will."<sup>1</sup> But, in truth, I think, but little importance can be attached to the deciphering of "orthodox" critics of the present day, desirous as

<sup>1</sup> Mr. T. K. Laughton writes in an interesting letter to *The Times* (November 27th, 1908): "I have not had occasion to examine the reputed Shakespeare signatures; but if, as I am told, and as Canon Beeching seems to admit, the spelling varies, I

they all are to read "Shakspeare" (if not "Shakespeare") in one, at least, of the signatures. The opinion of a highly competent observer, such as Malone, who had no particular "axe to grind" in this matter, and who had the enormous advantage of seeing the will nearly 120 years ago, when the ink was in a far more legible condition than it is now, must outweigh them all, whether Canons or "paleographers." I, therefore, take my stand with Malone, and those distinguished later critics, such as Sir Frederic Madden, Dr. Ingleby, and Dr. Furnivall, all of whom agreed that the signatures are to be read "Shakspere."

We all know, of course, that the player's name was spelt by his contemporaries in very many different ways. Dr. Ingleby has furnished us with examples of some fifty variant forms. The Will, for example, is itself endorsed in two places, presumably by the lawyer who prepared it, "Mr. Shackspere, his will."<sup>1</sup> Walter Roche, ex-master of the Stratford Grammar School, who ought to have known how to spell the name, writes "Shaxbere"; Richard Quiney, Shakspeare's fellow townsman, writes "Shackspere," as in the endorsement on the Will; Abraham Sturley, Shakspeare's "fellow countryman," writes "Shaxper"; Thomas Whitting, who was shepherd to Shakspeare's father-in-law, and of whom his wife borrowed forty shillings, knew him as "Shaxpere"; and in the marriage bond of November, 1582, he is "Shagspere." The form "Shakspere" appears in the entries of the baptism of William

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should consider it as grounds for a suspicion that they were not all genuine; a suspicion which would be much strengthened if the signatures differ in other respects." See the whole letter set forth in my reply to Canon Beeching (*In re Shakespeare*, p. 15, *et seq.*).

<sup>1</sup> It commences, "I Willim Shackspeare."

Shakspeare's children. In legal documents, however, the name is generally written as "Shakespeare." This, however, is by no means invariably the case. Thus, in the conveyance of January, 1596-7, from John Shakspeare to George Badger, we have "Shakspeare" in the body of the deed; and William and John Combe convey land in 1602 to "William Shakspeare" of Stratford. The plays, as we know, except when published anonymously, were given to the world in the name of "Shakespeare," or "Shake-speare,"<sup>1</sup> and this form was undoubtedly used as the player's name by some of his contemporaries. Thus, as we have already seen (*Ante*, p. 31), the clerk in the office of the Treasurer of the Chamber, in 1594-5, writes "William Shakespeare" as the actor's name, and at a later time, when, in the year of Shakspeare's death, Ben Jonson published a folio edition of his own works, he writes—and I do not think we have any reason to be surprised at it, in the circumstances—"Will Shake-speare" as the name of one of the "tragedians" who performed in *Sejanus*; and "Shakespeare" as the name of one of the "comedians" who played in *Every Man in his Humour*.

So much for the spelling of the player's name. A word now as to the pronunciation. On this matter an interesting letter appeared in *The Westminster Gazette* of March 17th, 1910, signed Ernest Law (who appears to write from the tents of orthodoxy), from which I extract the following:—

"All students of old English pronunciation are agreed that the *a* in such a syllable as the first of Shakespeare's

<sup>1</sup> Except in the one case of *Love's Labour's Lost* (1598), the title page of which bore the name of "W. Shakspeare."

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Greene, Shakspeare's cousin, calls him "Mr. Shakspeare." (*Ante* p. 159).

name had not, in Elizabethan and Stuart times, the sound which we generally give it to-day, but rather that of the *a* in French—a sound which has now almost entirely died out of the English language as spoken by educated people, at least in the South of England. The first syllable of the dramatist's name was, in fact, pronounced in his own day like the French word *chaque*; and the second syllable like the second syllable of the French word *espère*, or like the English word *spare*—and this is the pronunciation of the name that still obtains to this day among the peasantry of Warwickshire.

“The evolution of the original pure vowel sound of *a* in old English into the modern diphthongal one, and the analogous degradation of the pure *e*, have been conclusively traced by Ellis, Sweet, and Professor Daniel Jones.

“Shakespeare himself retained to the end of his life the original spelling of his name, and, we may be sure, its original native pronunciation also. The spelling now pretty well universal—in spite of Dr. Furnivall's gallant efforts in favour of the original one—appears to have had its origin in literary London, owing to a desire to indicate the supposed etymology of the name; and it so far had the countenance of the poet—in view, perhaps of his application for a grant of arms to the Herald's College—that he allowed it to be spelt in this way in his *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*. Moreover, it was the form almost invariably used in the Quartos, and the numerous contemporary commendations of the dramatist, as well as in the few official documents in which his name occurs. The conventional spelling was thus fixed very soon.

“Doubtless, however, the name was always pronounced during his lifetime and long after, with the old uncorrupted values to the vowels—which the Mountjoys would have



had no difficulty in articulating with the two French words *chaque, espère.*"

This is interesting, but I am by no means sure that Mr. George Hookham is not nearer the truth with reference to the pronunciation of the name, when he writes as follows (*National Review*, January, 1909): "Our usual spelling of the name 'Shakespeare,' and that now commonly in use, though Shakspeare himself, so far as we know, never spelt it that way, was apparently unknown to Stratford till late in Shakspeare's life. More than this, the pronunciation implied by the spelling was equally unknown. The first syllable was pronounced 'Shack,' and constantly written so. Of this there seems to be no doubt whatever. It is also probable that the second syllable was pronounced 'spur.' The author of the plays first used the spelling Shakespeare, and, as it seems to me, intended, whoever he was, to indicate a different pronunciation. In order, again, as it seems to me, that there should be no mistake, no possible reversion to the Stratford pronunciation, he generally even took the precaution of having it printed with a hyphen, thus, Shake-speare; which can by no possibility be miscalled. The instructed play-goer possibly drew the distinction, pronouncing the actor's and the author's name differently."

There may be some doubt, perhaps, whether "the author of the plays *first* used the spelling Shakespeare," but this does not invalidate Mr. Hookham's argument, which seems to me well worthy of consideration. Malone, as we have already seen, thought that "Shaksper" probably represented "the vulgar pronunciation" among the player's contemporaries, and thus appears to agree with the "Shackspur" of Mr. Hookham. Very different is the form "Shake-speare," which, with or without the hyphen,

player Shakspere himself never employed. This is the form which, as old Thomas Fuller remarks, suggests *Martial* in its warlike sound, "Hasti-vibrans" or "Shake-speare," and, as I have written elsewhere, "It is, of course, further suggestive of Pallas Minerva, the goddess of Wisdom, for Pallas also was a spear-shaker, and all will remember Ben Jonson's verses prefixed to the First Folio, in which he speaks of Shake-speare's 'well tornéd and true filéd lines,'

In each of which he seems to shake a lance,  
As brandish'd at the eyes of ignorance."

Moreover, as Mr. Gollancz has told us: "The earliest allusion to Shakespeare by *name* occurs in connection with a reference to his *Lucrece* in the commencing verses of a laudatory address prefixed to 'Willobie his Avisa,' 1594." The lines are:—

"Yet Tarquyne pluckt his glistering grape  
And Shake-speare paints poor Lucrece rape."

So that Shakespeare is first introduced to us in his spear-shaking and hyphenated form. These lines, be it observed, are of the same date as the publication of *Lucrece*, which was in the year following that which saw "the first heir of my invention" (*Venus and Adonis*) given to the public, under the name of "Shakespeare."

"Shakespeare," then, and, more particularly, "Shake-speare" makes an excellent *nom de plume*; whereas Shakspere, or Shaksper, or Shaxpur does not. And that is the only point which I desire to make with reference to the difference, both as regards spelling, and as regards pronunciation, of "Shakespeare" on the one hand, and "Shakspere", and all its multitudinous variants, on the other.

Since the above was put into print Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence has published his book *Bacon is Shakespeare*, wherein he contends that Shakspeare's alleged signatures are not, in reality, his signatures at all, but were written by the solicitor in attendance or some other scribe. He assumes that Francis Collyns, the Warwick solicitor, wrote not only the body of Shakspeare's will, but also the name of the testator on each page thereof, and the names of the witnesses at the end. He agrees with the contention of Magdalene Thumm-Kintzel that the body of the will and the signatures are in the same handwriting, and quaintly adds that that lady's article, in the Leipzig magazine, *Der Menschenkenner* (January 1909), has "conclusively proved" that Shakespeare's name was written by the solicitor!

Now Magdalene Thumm-Kintzel contends that whoever may have been the writer of the will, it could not have been Francis Collyns. She says, "Francis Collins's handwriting is seen on the testament as one of the witnesses, and is so distinctly different from the testament's hand that an identity is altogether out of question." She further argues, on grounds which do not seem to me at all conclusive, that the handwriting is not that of a clerk. Her contention, therefore, is that the whole will, as well as the signatures, is in the handwriting of Shakspeare!

Here is a wonderful discovery! Here is a fact which ought to have been patent to all observers, but which, nevertheless, escaped the vigilant eyes of Steevens and Malone, and all critics and "paleographers" for 160 years or so, only to be revealed by a German lady in the twentieth century! It would be interesting to know what the orthodox authorities—Mr. Lee, for example—think of this astounding revelation! So far as I know they have made

no deliverance on the matter. As for me, I do not pretend to be what the lady calls a "graphonomist" (this is distinctly "one better" than Dr. Wallace's "paleographer"), but I have eyes, for what they are worth, and they fail to persuade me that the body of the will and the signatures are in the same handwriting. On the contrary, I am convinced that the signatures are in a different hand. The lady, by the way, though she presents us with some "facsimiles" from the document in question, omits to include among them the words, "I Willīm Shackspeare" at the commencement of the will. If her theory is to be accepted we must believe that Shakspeare indulged in yet another variant of his name, and, in this instance, wrote himself down "Shackspeare"! As to Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence, it will be seen that he has to impeach the testimony of his own witness, while accepting the conclusion at which she arrives, viz., that the will and the signatures are all in the same handwriting. He lays stress upon the fact that "the Will is stated to be published (not signed) in the presence of the witnesses" (Letter to *The Pall Mall Gazette*, October 1st, 1910). The words are, "Witnes to the publyshing hereof Fra. Collyns, Julyus Shawe, &c.," and then follows, "By me William Shakspeare"; and it must be remembered that, at the date in question, signature was not necessary to the legal validity of a will, and was not, therefore, so important as publication. I am constrained then, to reject both Magdalene Thumm-Kintzel's theory, and Sir E. Durning-Lawrence's peculiar application of it.

But what of the two Blackfriars deeds of March 10th and 11th, 1613? As to these Sir Edwin has a very remarkable communication to make. He tells us that "Some years ago, by the courtesy of the Corporation

of London, the Librarian and the Chairman of the Library Committee carried the Purchase Deed to the British Museum to place it side by side with the Mortgage Deed there. After they had with myself and the Museum Authorities most carefully examined the two deeds, the Librarian of the City Corporation said to me, There is no reason to suppose that the Corporation deed has upon it the signature of Wm. Shakespeare, and the British Museum Authorities likewise told me that they did not think that the Museum Mortgage Deed had upon it a signature of William Shakespeare." This is, indeed, surprising. The two signatures have been constantly paraded as genuine specimens of Shakspeare's handwriting ; nevertheless we are now told that both the Librarian of the City Corporation, and " the British Museum Authorities " agreed, " some years ago," that neither document really bears " the signature of William Shakespeare " ! This is so astonishing that one can but regret that Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence is not more particular as to the date of this important interview, and that he does not inform us who were " the British Museum Authorities " who frankly admitted that all the biographers have been in error when they assured us that on these documents we have the handwriting of Shakspeare of Stratford. Possibly we shall hear more on this matter before long.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the answers to interrogatories recently discovered by Dr. Wallace at the Record office, it will be remembered that according to Dr. Wallace himself, Shakspeare's deposition is signed " Willm Shaks " <sup>2</sup> ; but Sir E. Durning-Lawrence maintains that the learned doctor

<sup>1</sup> I have received a letter from Sir Edward Maunde-Thompson in which he ridicules Sir E. Durning-Lawrence's story as entirely imaginary, and says " the whole thing is absurd."

<sup>2</sup> Ante, Part III.

has misread the signature which is, in fact, "Wilm Shaxpr." He goes on to contend that this was written by "the law clerk," the dot below the "S," which might be mistaken for an accidental blot, being in reality Shakspeare's "Mark." I am content to leave the reading of the abbreviated signature as a bone of contention for the "experts" to worry; but there certainly seems to be some force in Sir E. Durning-Lawrence's remark that a deponent in a lawsuit would hardly be allowed to sign his answers to interrogatories in such an abbreviated form. Sir Edwin, indeed, states that "such an abbreviation would be impossible" in such a case, but we really do not know what might have been allowed in "The Court of Requests" at the date in question.

The deduction which Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence makes from all this is that Shakspeare of Stratford was so entirely illiterate that he "could not so much as manage to scrawl his own name." Now, *ex hypothesi*, Shakspeare's name, in the altered form of "Shakespeare" or "Shake-speare," was adopted as a pseudonym by the real author of the *Plays and Poems*; whence it came about that the authorship of these was subsequently attributed to the Stratford Player. Sir E. Durning-Lawrence, therefore, would have us believe that the real author (Bacon, according to him) deliberately selected as a pseudonym the name of an entirely uneducated and illiterate man, and that this Stratford rustic who could neither read nor write, came to be looked upon as the author of the works of Shakespeare! If the alternative lay between this and "orthodoxy," I fear Sir Edwin's arguments would drive many wandering sheep back to the Stratfordian fold! Happily, however, that is *not* the alternative.

## ADDENDUM.

Upon the question whether or not the name of "Terence" was made use of as a mask-name under which were published works written by Scipio and Lælius—one or both—I have been referred to a short, but excellent, article in *Baconiana* for April, 1910, headed "Like is Likely," and signed "W. A. Sutton." The writer points out that "The famous Latin dramatist, Terence, was a Carthaginian slave (B.C. 185-159), brought as a boy to Rome, and belonged to a senator, Terentius Lucanus, who educated him, freed him, and, *more solito*, gave him his own name," and, further, that this "Terentius Afer" died at the early age of twenty-six. He supplements my quotation from Quintilian by another from Cicero, viz., "Secutusque sum . . . Terentium, cujus fabellæ propter elegantiam sermonis putabantur a C. Laelio scribi" (*Ad. Att.*, vii. 3), and points out that Suetonius declares that this belief regarding the authorship of these plays strengthened with time. Terence himself proves the existence of such belief in his own time by his prologue to the *Adelphi*, where he alludes to what "spiteful, people say, that great personages help the author and continually compose along with him," the references being, according to Donatus and others, to Scipio and Lælius, by one of whom the prologue itself was very possibly composed. If Davies of Hereford had these things in mind, it is not difficult to see how he came to address "Shakespeare," who, for many years previous to the publication of the epigram, had been better known as a writer of tragedies than of comedies, as "Our English Terence." "Had Davies called him 'Our English Seneca,' or 'our English Sophocles,' there would be nothing curious about it. Terence was famous for his comedies alone."





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